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THE  
KINGDOM OF HEAVEN



## ERRATA.

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We deeply regret a few glaring misprints, which are :—

PAGE	LINE	ERROR	CORRECTION
101	19	became	because
112	8	Zaman	Yaman
227	5	are a	are not
249	21	religion a factor	religion is a factor
264	18	Historian sixteenth	Historian of the sixteenth

*Publishers.*

اتقوا أمر الله فلا تتسرعوا له (قرآن مجید)

*The Kingdom of God has come; therefore do not desire to hasten it (The Holy Quran.16:1).*

THE  
KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

An outline of Islamic principles, showing how they have contributed to modern civilization, and how they can bring about the millennium; with special reference to Indian problems, pointing out why an Indian Muslim ought to be Muslim first and Indian after.

BY

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AND

the late Imam of the Mosque, Woking, England.

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**LAHORE.**

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To

*The Sad and Ever-green Memory*

OF MY MOTHER.

اے رہ نورِ دِ عالمِ بالا چِ گونہ  
ما بے تو درِ جمیم، تو بے ما چِ گونہ

O the way-farer of the Higher Region !

how are you ?

We are in distress without you

how are you without us ?

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Nawab Sir Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi,  
Bahadur K.C.V.O. Nawab of Bahawalpur.

هَلُمَّ إِلَى لَا تَقْصُدْ سِوَايَ

أَنَا الْمَنَّانُ فَاطْلُبْنِي تَجِدْنِي

أَتَذْكُرُ لَيْلَةَ نَادَيْتَ سِرًّا

فَلَمْ أَسْمَعْكَ فَاطْلُبْنِي تَجِدْنِي

إِذَا الْبُضْطُ قَالَ الْآتِرَانِي

نَظَرْتُ إِلَيْهِ فَاطْلُبْنِي تَجِدْنِي

إِذَا عَبْدِي عَصَانِي لَمْ تَجِدْنِي

سَرِيعُ الْآخِذِ فَاطْلُبْنِي تَجِدْنِي

## Translation.

Come to Me, do not seek except Me,

I am the Beneficent; therefore, seek Me, you will  
find Me.

Do you remember any night in which you have  
called Me secretly;

And I did not hear you? Then, seek Me; you  
will find Me.

When the afflicted one says: "Dost not Thou  
see Me"?

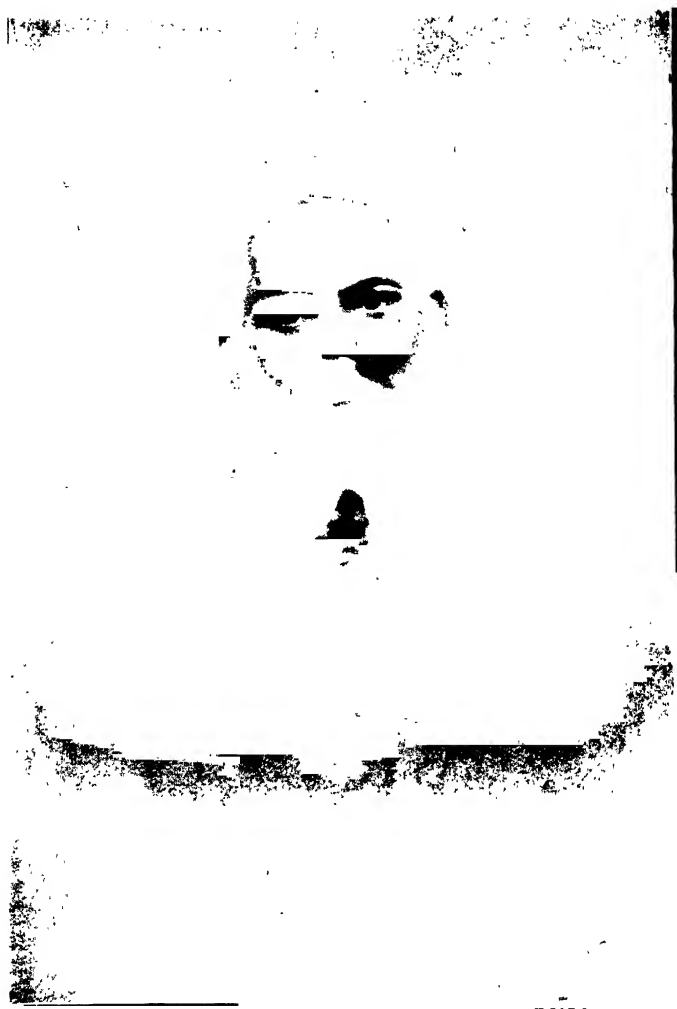
I look toward him, therefore, seek Me, you will  
find Me.

When My servant disobeys Me, you will not find Me

Quick in chastising, therefore, seek Me you will  
find Me.







**THE AUTHOR**

## PREFACE.

**I**NDIA is in transition. Her political leaders are busy in making new programmes and setting up new ideals. In this hubbub of politics, however, some prominent members of the Congress, both Hindus and Muslims, have given expression to the ideas which, directly or indirectly, reveal their mentality towards religion. For instance, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, the President-elect of the Lahore Session of the Congress held in December 1929, observed that he was a Hindu merely by accident, as he happened to be born in a Hindu family, otherwise he knew nothing about his religion. Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew was perhaps more outspoken. He said that religion was after all a matter of opinion, which was always subject to change. He argued that we could change our religion whenever we liked but we could not change our country. Such observations are, no doubt, a true index to the mass conception of religion. If religion is only a set of ideas professed publicly, it is certainly not worth serious consideration. I shall even go so far as to affirm that if

it is a set of mere dogmas or rites, even then it is not worth consideration. And undoubtedly such is the popular conception of religion. But men of Pandit Jawahar Lal's and Dr. Kitchlew's light and learning are expected to know much more about religion than the man-in-the-street. I have not thoroughly studied the Hindu religion. Yet from what I have gathered from its broad principles and teachings I can safely assert that originally it was more than dogmas, ceremonials and ritual. Manu, who occupies a prominent place in the Hindu theology, was a great law-giver. His laws may be obsolete now, owing to the advance of times; but originally they were meant for the uplift of society. The ancient Shastras, too, are rich in religious lore, and furnish the minute details of the Hindu law of society. It is true that this law deals with a most primitive stage of humanity and is impracticable in its details in modern times. But still it must contain some fundamental truths, which, if broadly and rationally interpreted, will yet form the basic principles of human civilization. Similarly, Christianity of the day is pre-eminently a religion of dogmas and ritual. But originally the church

of Jesus was a practical institution. It was a code of life and not the "sacrament." Jesus came to "fulfil the law," and he gave his disciples detailed instructions for it. The modern church which wrongly goes after the name of Jesus is chiefly based upon "sacrament" but Jesus gave his disciples the "Sermon on the Mount," and not the "sacrament." In a word, religion in its purity is not a set of dogmas or ritual. It is a code of life, and therefore humanity is in perpetual need of it. No human civilization is possible without religion. In our days Russia has abandoned religion. But what are the consequences? The country is full of disorder and anarchy. It has no settled Government and has little connection with the civilized world. I do not suppose that the political leaders of this country, while condemning religion really mean to convert India into Soviet Russia, but I do hold that if a "no religion" campaign is carried on, the consequences will be just the same as in Russia. No amount of political sophistry can withhold history from repeating itself.

Nevertheless, I have no reason to doubt the sincerity of the political leaders. I realize

the significance of their words. They want to unite the jarring elements of India for her political independence ; and because religion has unfortunately been a great factor in promoting racial hatred, they want to abandon it. The end is laudible but the means is wrong. Strictly speaking it is due to the wrong but popular conception of religion. As I have said above, religion is a code of life ; therefore, it is indispensable for human progress. But the difficulty is that most religions in the world have lost their original purity, and have degenerated into mere superstition. Such faiths are indeed bundles of dogmas and ritual ; they serve no purpose. But Islam is free from such drawbacks. Historically, it is the last phase of the revealed religion. I say the "last phase" advisedly, because there has been only one religion for humanity, revealed to different prophets in different countries, varying according to the necessities of times in minor details but concurring on fundamentals. These prophets brought a message of truth from their Lord ; but through the passage of time that message was either lost altogether, or was polluted with human alloy. Take for instance the case of the Holy

Bible. There is no original text of it in the Hebrew language which was spoken by the Israelite prophets. The present Bible is a translation and re-translation from the Greek text, which can hardly represent the original one. Modern research has proved that the Bible is not an infallible work. The American Church has gone so far as to exclude the study of the Bible from the curriculum of schools, because the young students from its study will be, according to Bishop Barnes, driven to the inevitable conclusion that "their forefather's standard of truth was very low" The history of the Genesis given in the Bible is open to many scientific objections; and is not befitting Divine Knowledge. But it does not prove that the Israelite prophets did not receive the Divine Word. The fact is that their message has lost its original purity. The language in which it was couched is dead. It is not spoken in any part of the world. Similar is the case with the Hindu scriptures. Their language, too, is dead. We cannot study the Hindu religion from its original sources. There is no correct and authentic translation of the Vedas and one cannot understand what the utility of such

a book can be. But the case of Islam is quite different. Its sacred book, the Quran, enjoys a unique purity of text. It is exactly the same book which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad about fourteen hundred years ago. It is absolutely free from human adulteration. Nothing has been subtracted from or added to it. Even hostile critics of Islam have admitted the purity of its text.<sup>1</sup> Its language is spoken in many parts of the world. One can understand the Quranic expressions even to-day as in the time of the Prophet. The Quran is the last heavenly Book sent for the reformation of humanity and has laid down claims to recapitulate all the fundamental truths of the previous scriptures.<sup>2</sup> So if we want to study the function of religion or determine its *role* in human civilization, which is the common goal of every thinking man, be he an athiest, we must study Islam. It is not fair to condemn religion without studying its last and most perfect phase, which is Islam.

In the following pages I have tried to

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1. Sir William Muir writes : "There is probably in the world no other work which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text,"; and adds these words of Von Hammer : "We hold the Koran to be as surely Mohamed's word, as the Mohamedans hold it to be the word of God." *The Life of Mohammad*.

2. XCVIII : 3.

present a few salient features of Islam to show how it has contributed to the world's civilization and how its teachings, if practised, can bring about the millennium. I hope the perusal of this book will help many young men to answer the burning question of the day: "Are you Muslim first or Indian?"

MUSTAFA KHAN.

Lahore, April 3, 1930.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE OBJECT OF RELIGION.

For all those who follow a religion, the most pertinent question is : what is the object of religion? To answer this question I must go through the pages of the Quran. According to the Holy Book, a true religion is meant for the regeneration of humanity. It wants to uncover, or develop the latent faculties of man. An all round and harmonious development of what God has given us is the only function of religion. The Quranic expression for this idea is *Falah*, which literally means to *cultivate* or *break* the soil. The idea is that just as by breaking the virgin soil, one brings out the hidden faculties of the land, and consequently gets a good harvest, similarly the religion from God develops, the latent faculties of man to their perfection. The Quran in its very beginning says : "This book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who avoid (evil), those who believe in the unseen, keep up prayers, and spend out of what We have given them. And who believe in that which has been revealed to you and that which has been revealed before you and they are sure of the hereafter. These are on the right

course from their Lord and these it is that shall attain to *Falah* (prosperity and perfection)."<sup>1</sup> That is, the strict observance of these practical institutions of the faith, namely: (1) belief in the great Unseen (2) keeping up of prayers, (3) spending benevolently in the way of the Lord, (4) belief in the Quran, and belief in the past scriptures, and in the life after death, will bring about a transformation in believers who will thus attain to the highest perfection. I will explain the full significance of these various institutions of Islam in a separate chapter of this book. But here, I must draw the attention of the reader to the fact that these institutions do not in themselves constitute the object of religion. They are, as the Quran says, means to an end. They are meant to raise man to the highest pinnacle of progress. The object of religion, therefore, is to edify man, to bring out and develop his innate faculties to their full capacity. The Quran very appropriately strikes a note of caution in the words—"who avoid". These words very tersely point out to a universal law which governs every growth in the world.

Look at a tiny seed, which has all the potentialities of growing into a huge tree giving shelter to thousands of people under its shade. But before it grows into such a big tree the husbandman should take all care to safeguard it against all destructive forces calculated to impede its growth and to nip it in the bud. No growth, no progress, is possible unless we avoid all that is harmful. The weeding out of the field is essential to a good harvest. The Nature before our eyes which is the work of God, teaches us that the progress of life depends upon two things: (1) assimilation of the useful, and (2) rejection of the harmful. My stomach will not entertain for a moment any thing which is foreign to it, my eye will not bear a mole in it. The Quran has come to lift up human society, and therefore, it has warned the people, at the outset, that it will help only those who will avoid all what is evil and harmful. And this injunction of the Quran is exactly in keeping with the laws of nature obtaining in the universe.

To turn to our subject, progress on the right lines in every walk of life is the object of Islam. Human nature is full of various passions and tendencies. It is also gifted with

various potentialities. Islam teaches us how to bring out or develop these passions and potentialities in harmonious growth. For instance patriotism is a human passion and Islam does want to engender it on right lines. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said : "Patriotism is a part of the faith." And the Quran stands for self-determination. The spirit of freedom prevails throughout the teachings of Islam. The great mission of the prophets has been to emancipate people from mental and physical servitude. Moses appeared to liberate the Isáraelites from the clutches of the tyrant Pharaoh. The Prophet Muhammad, in the words of the Holy Quran, freed his people from the "chains of customs and usages," that had destroyed their freedom and had made the Arabs a nation of slaves. Therefore, patriotism and freedom are quite in keeping with the teachings of Islam.

As a Muslim, I am expected to be a true patriot, and therefore, I need not desert my religion for the sake of patriotism. Again, in a country like India, national unity is the chief requisite for achieving political aspirations. And that unity hinges upon religious toleration and good will among the followers

of different persuasions. For that too, I need not forsake my religion, rather I should be a staunch Muslim, because Islam wants me to be tolerant and respectful to other faiths. The Quran enjoins me "not to abuse the idols of the polytheists, because they would abuse the Lord without knowledge." And this will result in creating discord and animosity. We are even required by the Quran to believe and respect the prophets of other nations. It is a part of our faith. The *Gita* is a Hindu scripture but it is respected by the whole of Muslim India on the principle enunciated by the Quran. The prophets of God, sent to ancient India or other countries, are as much our prophets as theirs. The Holy Quran says:—

Say : we believe in Allah and in that which has been revealed to us, and in that which was revealed to Abraham, and Ismail and Isaac and Jacob and the Tribes and in that which was given Moses and Jesus and in that which was given to the prophets from their Lord. We do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit.<sup>1</sup>

This verse from the Holy Book clearly mentions all the prophets of the world. Elsewhere we are told that "there is not a people but a warner has gone among them".<sup>1</sup> And the Quran also lays down that there are some prophets whom it has not mentioned.<sup>2</sup> But a Muslim is expected to believe in all the Prophets whether mentioned in the Quran or not. The belief in the universal dispensation of God is a potent factor to bring about unity among mankind and the Quran has implanted this belief in the heart of every Muslim.

The unity of God is another important theme of the Quran, which has dealt a death-blow to the man-made distinctions of human society. Read the history of the Hindu religion, and you will find that the caste system, untouchability, and other racial distinctions are based upon the worship of different gods. The Quran has done a great service to the cause of united humanity in expounding the doctrine of Unity. If we want to bring about a real unity among the different sections of humanity living in India, we must be worshippers of one God ; and it is *the* theme which has been overwhelmingly emphasised in the Quran.

Therefore, all well-wishers of India should do their level best to promulgate the Islamic doctrine of Unity among all Indians. They may not profess Islam theoretically ; but they must be Muslims in practice, so far as the Unity of God goes, for their political salvation. No reclamation of the depressed classes is possible unless the worship of *one* Great God is resorted to, and unless the untouchables are treated as the equal members of God's family.

The Quran has a wonderful power of reviving dead nations. It did infuse a new life into the Arabs who at the time of its revelation were at the nadir of degradation. The Holy Prophet is characterised by the Quran as "inspiring his people with life."<sup>1</sup> And it is historically true. No reformation has been so quick and so complete in the history of the world as that wrought by Islam during the space of only two decades, of a country that had admittedly sunk to the very depth of prostitution, which the human mind can possibly conceive of. "The creation of the political power of the Mohammadans was so sudden that it took the world by surprise."<sup>2</sup> The Arabs had no religion, no government,

1. VIII : 24      2. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th Edition.

no social life, no morality and no civilization. They were literally the wild sons of the desert. It was, however, through the religion taught by the Quran that these wild sons of the desert became the pioneers of the world's civilization. Those who took pride in ignorance and illiteracy became the world's teachers. Europe still owes a debt of gratitude to the Arabs who have left an everlasting mark on human civilization. And it was all due to Islam.

A true religion, therefore, as I have said above, is a fountain-head of human progress. It is meant to elevate humanity. Man is the most beautiful work of the Divine Hand. He is "made after the image of God." "Certainly we have created man" says the Holy Quran "in the best make."<sup>1</sup> He has been invested with vast potentialities, and has been gifted with knowledge. "And we gave Adam knowledge of all things".<sup>2</sup>

This superiority of man has made him the lord of creation and that is why the angels were required to "make obeisance to Adam".<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere the Quran says that "every thing in earth and heaven is made subservient to

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1. XCV : 4 Holy Quran 2. II : 31 Holy Quran 3. II : 34



man".<sup>1</sup> Man is therefore supposed to work out his vast capabilities in various walks of life. He is expected to give full play to his various faculties and thus bring them to perfection. But every thing in the world attains to perfection through obedience to certain laws. Religion provides man with the code of life, to which he must submit to work out his salvation. He is ordained to rule over the earth by virtue of his knowledge. But his government is to be characterised by Divine morals. "Imbue yourself with Divine attributes" says the Holy Prophet. And according to the Quran religion is a *Sibghat-ullah* i. e. Divine Tint, with which we are to dye ourselves. Elsewhere the Quran enjoins:—"Remember Allah as you remember your forefathers."<sup>2</sup> That is, as we keep the memory of our forefathers green by keeping up their traditions and following their ways; so must we remember God by following His ways and copying His morals. When men become little gods on the earth imitating the Divine attributes in all spheres of life, human society will reach the millennium for which Jesus prayed so fervently: "Thy kingdom

come. Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth."<sup>1</sup> These words of the master do not mean anything except that which I have pointed out above. God's will is done everywhere. "To Him submit, whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth".<sup>2</sup> Even man is subject to the Divine laws that are governing the universe. But he is free to some extent. He is not like the angels "who do whatever they are ordered".<sup>3</sup> He has been given, on the other hand, the choice of action. "We have shown him the way: he may accept or reject it."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, when Jesus prayed: "Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth," he meant only that the men living on the earth might walk in the ways of the Lord. But the master did not teach us "all the truth."<sup>5</sup> He, on the other hand, predicted the advent of the Comforter,<sup>6</sup> and prayed for the "Kingdom of Heaven." The "Comforter" came in the person of Muhammad who gave us the "Kingdom of Heaven," the Quran, which proclaimed: "The Kingdom of God has come, therefore do not desire to hasten it".<sup>7</sup>

1. Matthew VI: 10

2. Holy Quran III: 82

3. Holy Quran XVI: 50

4. Holy Quran LXXVI: 3

5. John. XVI: 12-13;

6. John, XIV: 25.

7. Holy Quran XVI: 1.

In short, a true religion from God comes to elevate humanity morally, intellectually, spiritually and physically. It dyes men with Divine attributes, and makes them fit to rule over the earth with equity, justice and benevolence. It makes them vice-regents of God on this planet. In a word, human edification is the object of religion. How this object was achieved by Islam will be seen in the following pages.

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## CHAPTER II.

### ISLAM AND THE ADVANCE OF MODERN SCIENCES.

As we have noticed in the preceding chapter, the Quran has revealed the real significance of religion. It has entirely changed the conception of the Divine Being. Religion is no longer a set of dogmas or ritual to appease an angry Deity. Prayers, alms, fasting, hymns, and sacrifices are not the means of propitiating God. They are, on the other hand, meant for the self-edification of man. God is above all human weaknesses. He does not feel elated by His glorification. This is only a human passion, and God is surely above it. Religion, according to the Quran, has to edify man. Self-realization is the great object of Islam. "One who realizes one's own self", says the Holy Prophet "realizes the Creator." The Holy Quran from the beginning to the end uniformly lays stress on the progress of humanity. The very first message revealed to the Prophet, gave in a nutshell, the whole programme of human civilization aimed at by the Quran. This Divine message was couched in the following terms:—

1. Read in the name of your Lord who created (everything).

2. He created man from a clot.

3. Read and your Lord is most honourable.

4. Who taught to write with pen.

5. Taught man what he knew not.<sup>1</sup>

These words are full of celestial light and profound significance. In the first verse it is mentioned that God is the Creator of every thing in the universe; in the second the creation of man, who is *Khalifatullah*, the vice-regent of God on the earth, and the most important design of the Divine Hand, has been separately and particularly mentioned to give due importance to his existence. In another place the Quran has clearly said: "Certainly We have created man in the best make."<sup>2</sup> In the third verse it is enunciated that "your Lord is most honourable" implying that he wants to make man, His vice-regent, also most honourable." The Quran has repeatedly claimed that its mission is to elevate man. Addressing humanity in another place, it says: "In this book (the Quran) lies your eminence."<sup>3</sup>

How is man to achieve this eminence, how is he to be made most honourable? The answer to this question is given in the fourth and fifth verses of the above passage. That is, man will make progress by reading and writing. It is clearly stated here that God is going to teach man "with pen what he knew not". These words transparently prophesy the advance of the modern sciences and their *role* in human civilization. Promotion of knowledge is thus a great function of the Quran. That is why the very first revelation of it begins, with the word "Read." The Quran also enjoins everyone of us to pray: "O God increase my knowledge."<sup>1</sup> And the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "Acquisition of knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim, male and female." The story of Adam given in the Quran makes it abundantly clear that man's superiority lies in his being gifted with knowledge. "And He gave Adam knowledge of all things."<sup>2</sup> The angels, of course, did not possess this knowledge. That is why they are ordered to "make obeisance to Adam."<sup>3</sup> This obeisance means obedience to man owing to his advanced knowledge. Now, does not the

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1. XX: 114.

2. II: 31.

3. II: 34

whole history of human civilization bear testimony to the truth of this statement of the Quran? Is not the domination of the Western peoples due to their scientific knowledge, and higher standard of character, which again is due to their advanced knowledge. I have been to the West. I have stayed in England for two years: and fortunately I am in a position to speak on the subject with first-hand knowledge. I am fully conversant with the social evils of the West. Nevertheless, I can safely say that on the whole the Western peoples are superior to us in character and culture. In fact their superiority lies in the acquisition of science and knowledge, which the Quran has made compulsory for us. Now, if we want to throw off the Western yoke, should we not make progress in knowledge according to the teachings of Islam? Should we abandon Islam, and remain uneducated, ignorant, and illiterate to gain victory over the British? As a Muslim I do not understand what the Congress-men aim at by deserting religion. A Western people are ruling over us, because they are Muslims in practice. Can we become independent by discarding the teachings of Islam?

Our modern civilization which has won universal appreciation is based upon the sciences which European scholars learned from the Muslim universities of Cordova and Bagdad. The progress of knowledge and science which has revolutionized the whole world was due to the impetus given by the Quran and the Prophet. In the world's history, the Muslim rulers and Muslim scholars were the first and foremost in systematizing different branches of knowledge, because it formed a part of their faith. Before the revelation of the Quran, the whole world was in the dark. Acquisition of knowledge was only a private concern; and chiefly depended upon one's own hobby or genius. There were no regular academic institutions and no department for public instruction. The state was not responsible for educating people. The Greeks and the Romans were the most civilized nations of the ancient world. But they too had no national system of education. Of Greeks we read in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* that "for children and youths under the ephebic age there was practical regulation of schools or palestra by the state." Of Romans the same book says: "In the



earlier centuries of the Republic, Roman education was given entirely in family and public life. The father had unlimited power over his son's life, and was open to public censure if he failed to train him, in the ordinary moral, civic and religious duties. But it is *doubtful* if there were any *Schools* and it is *certain* there was no national literature to furnish the instrument of culture."<sup>1</sup>

But the Quran from the very beginning made education a national affair. In his early days at Medina after the battle of Badr, the Prophet demanded a literary ransom from the war prisoners. That is, instead of money he asked them to teach the boys of Medina how to write. This shows the Prophet's keen interest in the education of his people. The Arabs were an illiterate nation. They took pride in being *Ummi*, illiterate. Therefore, the Holy Prophet could have no inspiration from without for knowledge. He was not the product of his environment. He was the Divine teacher, and everything he did was under Divine inspiration. In obedience to the repeated injunctions of the Quran he invariably

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1. The Encyclopaedia Britannica 1st Edition Art : Education.

impressed upon his followers the value of knowledge and science. He is characterized in the Holy Book as an "apostle raised among the Arabs, who recites to them the communications from God, purifies them, and teaches them the Book and wisdom."<sup>1</sup>

After the historic *Hijrat* of the Prophet from Mecca, Medina became the centre of attraction. It became the "Prophet's City" and the peoples of different nationalities, Persians, Syrians, Greeks, and Africans, came to him to listen to his Divine Message. He explained to them the Word of God; but along with it he always preached the value of knowledge. He would often say: "Acquire knowledge because he who acquires it in the way of the Lord, performs an act of piety; who speaks of it praises the Lord; who seeks it adores God; who dispenses instruction in it bestows alms, and who imparts it to others, performs an act of devotion to God." "Knowledge entitles its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what is not; it lights the way to heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when bereft of

friends ; it guides us to happiness, it sustains us in misery, it is our ornament in the company of friends, it serves as an armour against our enemies." "With knowledge the servant of God rises to the heights of goodness and to a noble position; associates with sovereigns in this world and attains to the perfection of happiness in the next." "The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr." "Seek for knowledge even unto China." "He who leaves his home in search of knowledge walks in the path of God," "He who travels in search of knowledge, to him God shows the way of paradise. "One hour's meditation on the Creator's works is better than seventy years of prayer." "To listen to the instructions of science and learning for one hour is more meritorious than attending the funerals of a thousand martyrs, more meritorious than standing up in prayer for a thousand nights." "To the student who goes forth in quest of knowledge God will allot a high place in the mansions of bliss ; every step he takes is blessed ; and every lesson he receives has its reward." "The seeker of knowledge will be greeted in Heaven with a welcome from the angels."

“To listen to the words of the learned, and to instil into the heart the lessons of science, is better than religious exercises—better than liberating a hundred slaves.” “Him who favours learning and the learned, God will favour in the next world.” “He who honours the learned honours me.” Such utterances from the blessed lips of the Prophet can be multiplied. They would, no doubt, impress upon the reader the importance and value of knowledge and science. But they also signify that glorification of God lies in self-edification of man. For instance: seeking of knowledge is “God’s adoration.” One who leaves home in search of knowledge “walks in the path of God.” “One hour’s meditation on the works of God is better than seventy years’ prayer.” Do not these words clearly show that prayer and devotion to God are meant for our own exaltation and elevation, a point to which I referred in the beginning of this chapter.

Under the inspiring influence of the Quran and the Prophet the Arabs became the teachers of the world. Ali, the fourth Caliph of the Prophet was a great scholar. His lectures on the various branches of know-

ledge have won perpetual admiration from the scholars of the world. His love for knowledge is proverbial. He would say: "He dies not who gives his life to learning." "But for his (Ali's) assassination," writes a French historian, "the Muslim world might have witnessed the realization of the Prophet's teachings, in the actual amalgamation of reason with law and the impersonation of the first principles of true philosophy in positive action." The happy and congenial concurrence of many great minds in the city of the Prophet gave an impetus to the cultivation of science and literature. "From Medina," writes Syed Ameer Ali, "a stream of unusual intellectual activity flowed towards Damascus;" which being the seat of the Omayya Empire, was a gathering place of many races that came under the sway of Islam. Towards the close of the Omayya reign, several Muslim thinkers came into prominence, whose views on the burning questions of the time attracted great attention, and materially moulded the thoughts and the ideas of the succeeding generations. The rule of the Caliph Mansur, stands conspicuous for literary activities.

"It is a remarkable fact," says the author of *Culture under the Caliphs* "that the sovereign who makes us forget some of the darker sides of his nature by his moral and mental qualities also gave impetus to the great intellectual movement which now commenced in the Islamic world". The Caliph got many literary and scientific works of foreign languages translated into Arabic. He himself was a great scholar and a famous mathematician and possessed rare books on almost every branch of knowledge. Mansur's successors too were not only patrons of the learned but were themselves assiduous cultivators of science and art. Under their government intellectual development of the Muslims proceeded with wonderful rapidity.

During the reign of the Abbaside caliphs the Islamic world witnessed its epoch of glory. Under the first six Caliphs of this dynasty, and especially under Mamun, the Muslim civilization reached its zenith. The Abbases made the metropolis of the Muslim Empire, a repository of knowledge. The caliph, following the Prophet's precept—wisdom is a lost property of a Muslim who must have it wherever he finds it—sent

out his emissaries to the different parts of the globe to secure the hoarded wealth of antiquity. Schools and colleges were established throughout the empire. Public libraries were opened in every city free to every visitor. The great philosophers of the ancient world were studied side by side with the Holy Quran. Aristotle, Euclid, Plato and Themistius received their proper share of appreciation. The sovereigns personally took part in literary meetings and philosophical discussions which created wide public interest. Governors and provincial chiefs, copying the example set by the caliphs, tried to make the seats of their government out-rival other cities in literary pursuits. Travelling in the search of knowledge, as we have seen, is a pious duty in Islam. From the distant corners of the world the Muslim students flocked to the colleges of Cordova, Bagdad, and Cairo. A hostile writer in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* admits: "The glory of Muslim education was its university system." Even Christians, several of whom subsequently became ministers of the church, attended the

Muslim institutions.<sup>1</sup> Almuiz is rightly described as the Mamun of the West. The free University at Cairo, the *Darul-Hikmat*, a scientific institution, established by Almuiz succeeded in anticipating "Bacon's ideal with a fact." The Idrisis at Fez and the Arab rulers in Spain rivalled each other in the cultivation of science and letters. In short, from the shores of the Atlantic far away to the Pacific Ocean, the voice of philosophy and learning was resounded under the guidance and patronage of the Muslim rule.

Mamun's successors also continued to encourage and patronise the scientific spirit of the Bagdad school. The deductive method, which is wrongly supposed to be the sole creation of the West, was perfectly understood by the Muslims. "Marching from the known to the unknown, the school of Bagdad rendered to itself an exact account of the phenomena for the purpose of rising from the effect to the cause, accepting only that which had been demonstrated by experience."<sup>2</sup> "The Arabs in the ninth century," continues the

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1. e.g. Gerbest afterwards Pope Sylvester II, studied in Cordova.

2. Ameer Ali's "Spirit of Islam" p. 343,



author we are quoting, "were in possession of that fecund method which was to become long afterwards in the hands of the moderns, the instrument of their most beautiful discoveries."

The limited space at my disposal does not allow me to give a detailed description of the Muslim achievements in the domain of science and art. Volumes can be written on the subject. Therefore, I will confine myself only to some salient features of the subject, and mention the names of a few Muslims, who have made most valuable contributions to science and literature. Mashaallah, the well-known Arab astronomer, who lived in the reign of Mansur, has been called the Phoenix of his time; he wrote several valuable treatises on the "Astrolable and armillary sphere"; and the nature and movements of the heavenly bodies. His works still evoke the admiration of scientists. Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Nehavandi wrote an astronomical table, *Almustanad* which improved upon the notions of the ancient Greeks and Hindus. Other astronomers like Khalid-Ibni-Abdul Malik, Send Ibni Ali Yahya Ibni Mansur prepared *Verified Tables*. Their obser-

vations connected with "equinoxes, the eclipses, the apparitions of the comets" and other celestial bodies were extremely valuable additions to the science of astronomy. Muhammad, Ibn-i-Musa, al-Khwarisimi, made a new translation of the *Sidhanta* or the "India Tables," with notes and observations. Alkindi wrote two hundred books on different subjects—arithmetic, geometry, philosophy, metrology, optics and medicine. He was a great scholar of Greek and in his works he partly embodied the ancient lore of Athens and Alexandria. "His works" says Sedillot "are full of curious and interesting facts." Abu Maashar specialised himself in the study of celestial phenomena and the *Zij-abi-Maashar* or the "Table of Abu Maashar" occupies a most prominent place in the works of astronomy. The scientific discoveries of the sons of Musa bin Shakir, especially with regard to the evaluation of the mean movement of sun and other heavenly bodies are almost as exact as the latest discoveries of Europe. They also determined, with remarkable accuracy, the movements of the solar apogee, unknown to the Greeks. They calculated

precisely the size of the earth at the time when Europe believed in the flatness of the globe. Abul Hasan invented telescope, which was subsequently improved and used in the observations of Maragha and Cairo. Albatani's Astronomical Tables translated into Latin, furnished the ground work of astronomy in Europe for many centuries, and have immortalized the name of their author. Ali Abn-i-Amajuar and Abul Hasan Ali Abn-i-Amajuar generally known as Banu Amajuar, are noted for their calculation of lunar movements. Abdur Rahman Sufi one of the brilliant physicists of the age improved the photometry of the stars. Azd-ud-Doulah who built many hospitals for the sick and orphans in Bagdad, was himself a great scholar and mathematician. Jafar the son of Caliph Muktafi Billah made important observations regarding the erratic movements of comets and wrote a book on them. Alkahi, another well known astronomer, wrote on the movements of the planets. His discoveries added materially to the store of human knowledge. Abdul-Wafa, the mathematician and astronomer wrote the *Lij-ush-Shamil*, which is a monu-

ment of keen observation. He introduced the use of the secant and the tangent in trigonometry and astronomical observations. "But this was not all" says M. Sedillot: "struck by the imperfection of the lunar theory of Ptolemy, he verified the ancient observations, and discovered independently of *equitation of the centre and the eviction*, a third inequality which is no other than the variation determined six centuries later by Tycho Brahe".

At Cairo flourished Ibn-Yunus, the inventor of pendulum and the measurement of time. He is well known for his great work *Zijul-Akbar-al-Hakima*; which soon displaced the work of Claudius Ptolemy. The book was translated into Persian, Greek, Mengolian and Chinese. Thus what is sometimes attributed to the ancient civilization of China is only a borrowed light from Arabia. After Ibn-i-Yunus death his discoveries continued by Ibn-un-Nabdi, a distinguished astronomer and optician. He is best known in Europe for his works on optics, one of which was translated into Latin by Risner. He corrected the Greek misconceptions as to the nature of vision,

and proved for the first time that the rays of light come from external objects to the eye. He determined the retina as the seat of vision, conveying its impressions to the brain along the optic nerves. He discovered the refraction of light varies with density of atmosphere which again in its turn varies with the height. In his book the *Balance of Wisdom*, he discusses dynamical principles which are wrongly supposed to be the produce of the western thought. He seems to be the master of his subjects and knows correctly the relation between the velocities, spaces and times of falling bodies and has very clear ideas of capillary attraction.

In Spain, the same spirit of renaissance was at work. Servile, Cordova, Greneda Murcia, Toledo, and other towns possessed their public libraries and colleges where free education was imparted in science and letters. Of Cordova, an English writer observes :—

“Beautiful as were the palaces and gardens of Cordova, her claims to admiration in higher matters were no less strong. The mind was as lovely as the body. Her professors and teachers made her the centre

of European culture: students would come from all parts of Europe to study under her famous doctors and even the nun Hroswitha far away in her Saxon convent of Gaudersheim, when she told of the martyrdom of St. Eulogius, could not refrain from singing the praises of Cordova, 'the brightest splendour of the world.' Every branch of science was seriously studied there, and medicine received more and greater additions by the discoveries of the doctors and surgeons of Andalusia than it had gained during all the centuries that had elapsed since the days of Galen . . . Astronomy, geography, chemistry, natural history, all were studied with ardour at Cordova; and as for the graces of literature there never was a time in Europe when poetry became so much and the speech of everybody—when people of all ranks composed those Arabic verses which perhaps suggested models for the ballads and canzonets of the Spanish minstrels and the troubadours of Provence and Italy. No speech or address was complete without some scrap of verse, improvised on the spur of the moment by the speaker, or quoted by memory from

some famous poet " <sup>1</sup>

To these we may add the words of Renan: "The taste for science and literature had, by the tenth century, established, in this privileged corner of the world, a toleration of which modern time hardly offers us an example. Christians, Jews, and Mussalmans spoke the same tongue, sang the songs, participated in the same literary and scientific studies. All the barriers which separated the various peoples were effaced; all worked with one accord in the work of a common civilisation. The mosques of Cordova, where the student could be counted by thousands, became the active centres of philosophical and scientific studies." <sup>2</sup>

The first observatory in Europe owed its existence to the Arabs. The tower of Seville was erected under the guidance of the great mathematician Jabir ibn Afiah (1190) for the observation of the heavens. After the expulsion of the Moors, it was converted into a belfry, the Spaniards not knowing what else to do with it! Nor was Western Africa inactive in this period of renai-

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1. Stanby Lane-Pool, *The Moors in Spain* p. 144.

2. *The Spirit of Islam* p.p. 348-349.

ssance. Morocco, Fez, and Tangier, rivalled Cordova, Seville and Grenada. Their colleges too sent out able professors, and numerous learned works which once more testified the zealous study of the Muslims in all departments of knowledge.

The beginning of the eleventh century saw a political upheaval in central Asia. Mahmud of Gazni, the great conqueror brought Afghanistan, Transoxiana, and Persia under his sway. Mahmud, however, was not a mere conqueror. He was also a great lover of knowledge and art. He collected round him a galaxy of scholars and literatures who shed lustre in his court. The most brilliant star of this galaxy was Albeiruni, the philosopher. His mind was encyclopaedic. His work on astronomy, *Alkanun Masudi* is a monument of learning and research. He travelled in India, studied the Hindu literature and philosophy, and embodied his observations in a book which was recently translated into English. Besides, Al-beiruni has written on mathematics chronology, mathematical geography physics, and chemistry. He introduced the knowledge of the Bagdad schools to Hindus who



possessed no advanced astronomical science of their own. They too like the Chinese borrowed most of their scientific ideas from Islam and moulded them according to their national characteristics.

The successors of Mahmud too continued to patronize Art and science. The power and the munificence of Sel-juke kings for learning rivalled the golden age of Abbasis. Arp Arsalan, Tughril and Malik Shah were all distinguished for their intellectual attainments and enthusiasm in the cause of learning. The astronomical observations conducted in the reign of Malak Shah by a body of scholars with Omar Khayyam and Abdur Rahman Al-Hazaini at their head led to the reform of the Calendar which preceded the Gregorian by six hundred years. The terrible devastation of the Tartars under Changez Khan suspended for a time the intellectual development of Asia. But it is remarkable that the moment these wild savages of central Asia adopted the religion of Islam, a change came over them. From destroyers of the seats of learning, they became the founders of academies and protectors of the learned. Sultan Khoda Bendah

sixth in descent from Changez, was well known for his literary attainments and his patronage of science. The Mongols protected philosophers like Nasir-ud-din Tusi Muwaid-ud-din Al-orezi of Damascus Fakhur-ud-din Almaghrabi Mohi-ud-din Almaghrabi Ali Shah-al-Bokhari and many others.

In Egypt, Ibn-Shathir, developed still further the mathematical sciences. Timur, the great Empire builder of Asia, was a patron of science and poetry. He was himself an author and a legislator of no mean order. He built magnificent colleges and splendid mosques which testify to his taste for letters. Jami the master of sciences and a well known poet ; Suhaili translator of Pilpay, and Ali Sher Ameer were some of the literary men who flourished during the reign of Timur. His son Shah Rub Mirza kept up the traditions of his illustrious father. His reign for half a century was remarkable for the cultivation of art and science. His son Ulugh Beg was himself an astronomer of high rank, and maintained the literary and scientific glories of his predecessors. Besides

astronomy every branch of higher mathematics, nay every branch of human knowledge bears a mark of Muslim genius. Algebra in the hands of the ancient Greeks was, as Oelsner remarks, confined to furnishing amusements "for the plays of goblet". The Muslims, however, improved it and gave it a value hitherto unknown. They discovered equations of the second degree, and soon after they developed quadric equations and binomial theorem. Geometry, arithmetic, optics and mechanics made remarkable progress in the hands of Muslims. They invented spherical trigonometry and applied algebra to geometry to introduce the tangent and to substitute the sine for the arc in trigonometrical calculations. In mathematical geography the works of Muslim writers like Ibni Haukal and Abu Feda have a value of their own at a time when Europe was ready to burn any foolhardy person who did not believe in the flatness of the earth, the Muslims taught geography by globes. The physical sciences were also cultivated by Muslims. The method of *experimentation* was substituted for theorising; and the crude ideas of the ancient were developed

into positive sciences. Chemistry, botany, geology and natural history also exercised the energies of Muslims. Chemistry as a science is admittedly a Muslim invention. Jabir is the true father of modern chemistry. "Abu Musa Jabir ibn Hayyan who has" says Professor Holmyard "many claims to be considered the first to whom the title of Chemist may legitimately be applied" "The habit of unfruitful speculation," continues the author we are quoting "divorced from fact and observation was, however, foreign to his genius; and like many of his Muslim successors he preferred the laboratory to the realms of imagination. His views are, on the whole, clear and precise. The value of his contributions to chemistry has caused it to be well said that he thoroughly deserved the name of Jabir, for he it was who reorganized (jabara) the science, and set it on firm basis.<sup>1</sup>

The science of medicine and the art of surgery are equally indebted to Muslim genius. No doubt, medicine attained a high degree of excellence among Greeks, but the Muslims improved upon it and brought it

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1. Professor E.J. Holmyard. *Chemistry to the Times of Dalton* p.p. 15-16.

close to the modern standard. The study of medical substances in its scientific form is the creation of the Arabs. They invented chemical pharmacy and founded dispensaries. The persons in charge of dispensaries were under the control of government. The price and quality of the medicine were strictly regulated. Many dispensaries were maintained by the state, which held regular examinations for physicians and pharmacists, and gave licenses to the passed candidates. The license holders were alone entitled to practice—a reform which the Government of India may well imitate at present. They established in every city hospitals and maintained them at the expense of the state. The names of Muslim physicians who immensely contributed to the science of medicine are too many. I will mention only two of them. Albucasis or Abdul Khalaf ibn Abbas was not only a physician, but a surgeon of the first rank. He performed most difficult operations. In operations on women, he secured the services of the properly instructed nurses. The ample description left by him of his surgical instruments give an idea of the development of surgery

in those days. Aviceinna or Ibn Sina who has won the title of Sheikh was a man of varied deserts. He was philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, poet and physician ; He deserves the title of the Aristotle of the East. His great works the *Canoon* and *Arjuza*, form the foundation of all medical knowledge.

Muslims also advanced anatomy, which in the hands of Greeks was only in a crude form. They organized the study of botany and augmented the herbarology of the Greeks by addition of two thousand plants. There were regular gardens at Cairo, Bagdad, Fez, and Cordova for the education of pupils.

Aldemri is famous for his history of animals, a work which forestalled Ruffon by seven hundred years. Geology was also cultivated by the Muslims under the name of *Ilm-i-Tabqatul Arz*, i.e., science of the anatomy of the earth.

History is according to Professor Seeley the "mother of sciences," and History is unquestionably the invention of the Muslim mind. The universal history of Ibn-Khaldun, a monument of political science, forms an index to the intellectual activity of Islam. Makrisi (Taki-ud-Din Ahmad) is another

famous historian of Islam and is a contemporary of Ibn Khaldun. His works on Egypt give a graphic account of political, religious, social, commercial, archeological and administrative condition of the country. The Arabs were a nation of travellers. They voyaged to all parts of the world in quest of knowledge. They invented the mariner's compass and gave an impetus to navigation. They established colonies in Africa, and opened trade with China. They discovered Azores; and it is even surmised penetrated as far as America. The Arabs covered the country under their administration with a net work of canals, and roads. To Spain they gave the system of irrigation by flood gates, wheel and pumps with the result that the waste barren tracts of the land were turned into gardens and olive groves. They revived industry and labour because the Prophet had inculcated on them the value of labour. They established the culture of silk, the manufacture of paper and other fabrics; of porcelain, earthenware, iron and leather. The tapestries of Cordova, the woolen stuffs of Murcia, the silks of Grenada, Almeria Seville; the steel and gold work of Toledo

the paper of Salibah were demanded all over the world. In the midst of tenth century when Europe was about in the same condition that Caffraria is now enlightened Moors like Abdul Cassim were writing treatises on the principle of trade and commerce.<sup>1</sup>

The Muslim art of architecture requires no comment because the glorious remains of it in the East and the West will always evoke the admiration of the world. The Taj at Agra is still one of the seven wonders of the world.

This love of learning and art which characterised the Muslims of the East and the West was not only confined to one sex. Following the behest of the Prophet women were as keen in the pursuit of science and art as men. The Prophet's wife Ayesha was distinguished for her lectures on theology. People from distant corners of the Islamic world came to listen to her religious discourses. She was well versed in the Quran. During the glorious epoch of Islam women had their own colleges. They studied medicine and jurisprudence; lectured on ethics and theology and participated in every walk

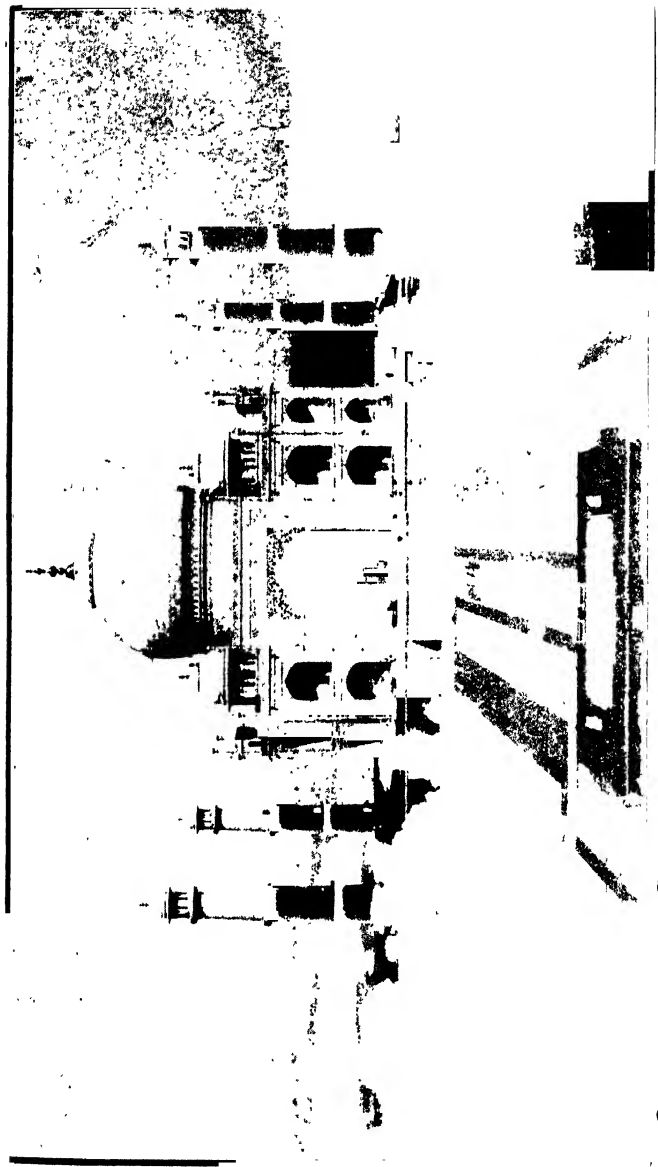
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1. *The Spirit of Islam* p. 362.



of life. The wives and daughters of sovereigns gave handsome donations for founding colleges and establishing hospitals for the sick and the homeless, for the orphan and the widow.

I have arrayed these facts for which I am chiefly indebted to Syed Ameer Ali's *Spirit of Islam* to give the reader an idea how the prophetic words of the Quran—Read in the name of your Lord, Read and your Lord is most Honourable; Who taught man to write with pen, (and) taught man what he knew not<sup>1</sup> — came out true in actual life, and how Muslims took active part in the renaissance which revolutionized the whole world. Islam is thus inseparately connected with human civilization. It has played an important part in the salvation of humanity in the past; and is surely destined to play a greater *role* in the future.



**TAJ MAHAL, AGRA.**



## CHAPTER III.

### THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM.

Islam does not believe in ritual. The fundamentals or the "Five Pillars" of Islam, as they are generally called, are practical institutions, conducive to the welfare and prosperity of the individual as well as of mankind in general. They are: (1) belief in one God, *Allah*, (2) prayer, (3) fasting, (4) charity, *Zakat*, (5) pilgrimage. Before I discuss them in detail, I should like to explain the significance of "belief." In Islamic theology belief is not a mere lip profession or a conviction of the truth of a given proposition; but it is essentially the adoption of a "proposition as a basis for action." A Muslim is required to believe in Allah or His angels; but he is not required to believe in the devils. Both facts so far as their existence goes, are equally true. The Quran on several occasions mentions the existence of devils and their evil insinuations; but nowhere are we required to believe in the devils because we are not expected to follow them in practical life. The Islamic belief, therefore, is not a formula for repiti-

tion, or for declaring the existence of a thing. It is, on the other hand, a formula for action, for practical life. Therefore, the significance of belief in Islam always includes practice. The belief in *Allah* is, thus, a practical institution of Islam. *Allah*, the Arabic word for God, denotes the Supreme Being, who possesses all the excellent attributes and is absolutely free from all sorts of frailties and weaknesses. And belief in Him means that we should, as far as possible, initiate, the Divine morals, and imbue ourselves with attributes of perfection. Thus Islamic belief is really a base upon which the superstructure of moral and spiritual life of man is raised.

### UNITY OF GOD.

The Unity of God is the subject on which the Quran has laid the greatest stress while polytheism or fetichism of every description has been vehemently condemned. "Surely Allah does not forgive," says the Holy Book, "that anything should be associated with Him and forgives what is besides that, to whomsoever He pleases, and whoever associates any thing with Allah, he

devises indeed a great sin.”<sup>1</sup> The history of every nation in the world shows that the belief in a plurality of gods has invariably led to intellectual stagnation, moral depravity and national degeneration. Disunion among the various sections of humanity is the immediate sequel of polytheism. Racial hatred and sectarian antagonism follow suit, and result in the utter destruction of social life. “My God and your God” has done the greatest wrong in the world. It has caused immense blood-shed; it has degraded humanity; it has profaned the sacred name of religion. When there are various gods their demands must be various; and their worshippers must cut the throat of each other in fulfilling the different demands of their respective gods. For instance, the Hindus of this country look upon the cow as their God; while Muslims take it as an animal, the eating and slaughtering of which is sanctioned by their God. This difference of view or more properly this divergence of Godhead has invariably proved a stumbling block to the national life of India. It has caused many riots; and the Government

has always to take extraordinary steps to keep peace on *Idul-Azha*, the Muslim festival of animal sacrifice. In Hindu society itself the variety of gods has always created troubles. The question of Brahman and non-Brahman in the Madras Presidency and elsewhere, the root of which is the racial superiority based upon the creation of different gods has always been a source of anxiety to the Government as well as to the people. The Brahmans are considered superior to the rest of the Hindus, because their creator is said to be superior to that of others and this invidious distinction has invariably caused end-less quarrels in politics and social life. The "Untouchables" of India who present a horrible scene of the most disgraceful and unbearable treatment meted out to a section of humanity, are the blackest spots on Hindu civilization. Their existence is chiefly due to the fetish cult of Hinduism. No redemption of these poor wretches is possible in Hindu religion according to which Shudras should have no access to the *Vedas* or any other branch of human knowledge. The doors of knowledge and science are closed to them for

ever. If a Shudra happens to listen to a verse of the *Vedas*, his ear, should be closed with melting lead. This is the reward the poor fellow gets for listening to the "word of God." The "Untouchables" are not permitted to get water from the wells of the Hindus. Nay, their very shadow is enough to pollute a high caste Hindu, who must purify his body and soul by having a dip in the sacred waters of the Ganges. Such is the state of Hindu society and it is all due to the worship of various gods, who are not less than thirty-three crores.

From times immemorial India has been under a foreign yoke. Many reasons may be ascribed to it; but I think the chief of them is the Hindu religion, which has divided the nation into water-tight compartments of castes and sub-castes and has sapped the national vitality. Even to-day the English statesmen find justification for the British rule in India in the existence of millions of the "Untouchables" and the illiterate who are incapable of safeguarding their interests. Had Hindus believed in one God and treated the "Untouchables" as their equal brethren; this plea would have not been advanced



against our legitimate claims to self-determination. Heathenism invariably contributes to the degeneration of society. The past history of mankind amply bears it out. The ancient Greeks and the Romans lost their empires under the superstitious influence of the pagan cult. The Romans before their downfall became the slaves of gods. Seneca, with all his Stoic philosophy and depth of erudition, would resort to offer the sacrifice of a goat to an idol. Christianity, too, became corrupt, when it gave way to superstition. Sir William Muir observes :—

“The Christianity of the seventh century was itself decrepit and corrupt. It was disabled by contending schisms and has substituted the puerilities of superstition for the pure and expansive faith of early ages.”<sup>1</sup>

Moulana Muhammad Ali writing on why polytheism has been denounced in the Quran says :—

“*Shirk* (associating gods with God) is condemned because it demoralises man ; and Divine unity is taught because it brings about the moral elevation of man. Belief in Divine unity goes not in any way to add

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1. Muir's *Life of Muhammad* p. XCV.

to the glory of God nor does *shirk* detract from it in the least. Man is described in the Holy Quran as *Khalifa* or vice-regent of God to show that he is gifted with the power of controlling the rest of creation (2 : 30). And he is thus placed above the whole creation even above the angels who make obeisance to him (2 : 34). He has been told expressly that he has been made to rule the world. "God is he who made subservient to you the sea that the ships may turn therein by His command and that you may seek of His grace and that you may give thanks, and he has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all from Himself; surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect (45 : 12, 13).

"If, then man has been created to rule the universe and he is gifted with the power and capabilities to subdue everything, and to turn it to his use, does he not degrade himself by taking other things for gods, by bowing before the elements of nature which he has been created to conquer and rule?"<sup>1</sup>

Again, summing up the doctrine of Divine

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1. Muhammad Ali's *Translation of the Holy Quran* pp. XLIII—XLIV.

Unity the author we are quoting observes :—

“The doctrine of Divine unity as preached by the Quran may now briefly be stated as follows : that there is the Supreme Being creator and Lord of all who alone is to be worshipped and from whom alone help is to be sought; that man is endowed with vast capabilities so that as he can conquer and subjugate the forces of nature and make them serve his purpose, and that all men are equal.”<sup>1</sup>

The Quran, therefore, has done a unique service to humanity in expounding the Unity of God. It has made man the governor of the universe. Let Hindu India accept one great God discarding all other man-made Deities for her political salvation, if not from a religious point of view. India has remained in foreign bondage for centuries owing to her polytheistic religion. Let her make a new experiment and be monotheistic. But the change must be complete. It should not be a lip confession; but the actual change of the heart. Belief in one God means belief in universal brotherhood of man; and it implies the recognition, in theory and practice, of the “Untouchables”

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1. Muhammad Ali's *Translation of the Holy Quran* p. XLV.

as the equal members of human fraternity ; it solves the question of "cow slaughter" and it disposes of once for all many questions of communal tension which have made India a burning hell on the earth.

The Muslims, the Hindus and the Christians of India are destined to live in the same country. Let them live peacefully and happily like brothers under the paternal care of *one Great God*.

Thus belief in Divine Unity is not a mere, hypothetical principle. It is, on the other hand, a potent factor in the building up of a nation. It welds together the heterogeneous elements of humanity into one homogeneous whole, and makes the brotherhood of man a living reality. That is why Islam has inculcated the belief in one God, Who is the God of all nations, black and white. The Holy Quran opens with a cosmopolitan conception of the Divine Being. He is *Rabul-alam* i.e. the Lord of all the worlds ; of all humanity high and low, poor and rich. The God of Islam is the universal God, Who lavishes care and love over the whole of mankind; nay, over the whole universe. He

is never partial; and knows no favouritism in the dispensation of our physical or spiritual needs. His physical bounties are equally distributed all over the world. His sun and moon shine over and give light to the white man of Europe as well as to the black negro of Africa. He has been equally impartial with regard to His dispensation of the spiritual requirements of man. He has sent His Messengers to all nations of the world. "And every nation had an apostle."<sup>1</sup> We Muslims are bound to believe in all the prophets of the world, thus testifying to the universal dispensation of God.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad was wise enough to see how Divine messengers are deified. He knew Jesus was raised from humanity to the pedestal of Divinity. Therefore, the Prophet took particular care to safe-guard his people from falling into such an error. He clearly defined his position and told his people that he was a human Prophet. "Say : I am but a mortal like you. It is revealed to me that your god is one God."<sup>2</sup> The Muslim formula for the unity of God also defines the Prophet's position.

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1. Holy Quran X : 47

2. XVIII : 110

It runs thus :—*Laillaha Illallah Muham-mad-ur-Rusulullah.*” “There is no God but Allah (and) Muhammad is His Apostle.”

There is, however, another important phase of the doctrine of Unity which has a direct bearing on the individual character of man. I have already observed that Islam wants us to mould our character after the Divine attributes. “Imbue yourself with the Divine morals” says the Holy Prophet. One of God’s attributes is Unity. He is unique in *every* respect. A man cannot be such. But he can be unique at least in *any* one respect. He can be *one* man in the whole world in respect of a certain attainment. The living nations of the world always produce such men who have world-wide reputation. In the doctrine of Unity we have an impetus to attain to such eminence. In the glorious days of Islam, when Muslims were Muslims in the real sense of the word, the world has seen many such men who left the mark of their unique personalities on the sands of time.

#### PRAYER.

Prayer is the means by which a man seeks to drink deep at the fountainhead

of the Divine morals. The Quran speaks of the prayer immediately after the belief in God in the very beginning:—"This book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who avoid (evil). Those who believe in the Unseen *i. e.* God, keep up prayer and spend out of what we have given them.<sup>1</sup> The Arabic word for prayer is *salat*, which originally means supplication or petitioning.

It is also said the word is derived from *sala* (burnt) and signifies that through prayer a man seeks to burn or kill the animal within him. The Holy Quran also speaks of it as the means of the purification of the heart: "Prayer keeps one away from indecency and evil!"<sup>2</sup>

To most people the existence of God is a mere theory: Yet in every age and among every nation there have been men who have realized in their heart the existence of the Supreme Being through prayer. They have so to speak *seen* God with their inward eye. In their case the belief in God has proved a great moral force, which did not only change their own lives but enabled them to bring about entire transformation

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1. II : 2-3

2. XXIX : 45

of the lives of nations. The wonderful reformation of Arabia brought about by the Holy Prophet in the space of two decades, was in fact due to his realization of the spirit of God through long and devout prayers in the cave of Hira. Again, prayer is a natural sequel to the acceptance of God. It is the out-pouring of one's heart to the Creator. It brings a man into close touch with the all-pervading Spirit, the fountain-head of all purity and the source of all the highest morals. It, therefore, helps man to imbue himself with the Divine morals—the great object of religion. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said “prayer is the *Miraj* (ladder) of a believer.” That is, by it one can ascend to the heights of moral and intellectual greatness.

Islam includes the material advance or the worldly comforts of this life in the scope of religion. “There is no asceticism in Islam” says the Prophet: The Quran is still more explicit on the subject: “In the creation of the heavens and the alteration of the night and the day, there are surely signs for men of understanding; those who remember God standing and sitting and lying on their sides



and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth.”<sup>1</sup> “Reflection on the creation of the heavens and the earth” and on the alteration of the night and day clearly stand for scientific research. Astronomy, biology, natural geography, herbiology, medicine and in fact all the modern sciences owe their existence to reflection on the things of this world. Science is nothing but knowledge gained by reflection which includes systematic observation and experiment. To men of understanding the Quran recommends the remembrance of God with the pursuit of sciences, thus combining moral and spiritual greatness with material and worldly advancement. That is why Islam stands conspicuous among other religions of the world in giving impetus to learning. Prayer and meditation are closely related to each other. The one leads to the realization of the moral and spiritual aspirations of man; and the other to his intellectual and material progress. It is for this reason that the Prophet has said: “one hour’s meditation on the work of the Creator is better than seventy years’ prayers” (without a devout spirit.)

The most important part of the Muslim prayer is the first chapter of the Holy Quran which is as follows :—

“All praise is due to God the Rabb (*i. e.* feeder, nourisher and evolver of the worlds). The Beneficent, the Merciful, the Master of the day of requital. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help. Guide us on the right path. The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours. Not of those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor of those who go astray”.<sup>1</sup>

In this prayer the four chief attributes of God are mentioned, viz, Providence, Beneficence, Mercy and Retribution. And these attributes decidedly make the best moral code for humanity. A Muslim recites them five times a day to keep constantly before his eyes the Divine morals with which he ought to imbue himself. Firstly, he is expected to make provision or earn bread for his wife, children and all those who are dependent upon him. Secondly, he is expected to be beneficent to other human beings and his fellow creatures giving them in benevolence out of what God has given him without any

service on their part or any reward from them. Thirdly, he is expected to give others the ample compensation for their actions; and fourthly, he is expected to punish the offenders with a view to rectify them and not in a vindictive spirit.<sup>1</sup> Do not those precepts, if carried out into practice, make man the best citizen? No human society can exist without these virtues. Therefore, the Holy Prophet has made this chapter of the Quran the most essential part of the Islamic prayer.

In its outward form too the Muslim prayer is pregnant with a lesson. It represents a beautiful scene of man's equality. In prayer we stand respectfully before our Maker in Whose eye a prince and a peasant are equal; and therefore there is no dis-

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1. The original words of Arabic convey deeper significance than their equivalents in English; and hence I am compelled to add qualifying phrases to explain the real meanings. For instance the word *Ar-Rahman* (Beneficent) means Beneficent God who bestows his favour on man without any action on his part: while *Ar-Rahim* (Merciful) means Merciful God who gives ample compensation for the action of man. And God's being the Master of the day of requital denotes that His law of retribution is characterised by the spirit of a master to his servant or his possession. If my servant does a wrong I will not be vindictive on him rather I will punish him or forgive him as the occasion demands to correct him. And that is the most enlightened view of the human law too.

inction of rank or file in prayer. The poorest Muslim can stand side by side with the strongest monarch in the prayer line. The brotherhood of man which was established in the belief in the unity of God has been practically realized in prayer.

If our prayer is devoid of all these requisites, which I have briefly mentioned above; if it has failed to bring us into close touch with the Divine Spirit, if it has not dyed us with the Divine morals, if it has not made us good citizens and if it has not inculcated on us the love of our fellowmen and fellow creatures, then our prayer is not a true Muslim prayer. The Quran condemns prayer, which degenerates into a mere ritual. "Woe to praying ones who are unmindful of their prayers."<sup>1</sup>

So far, I have dealt with the service which Islam has made obligatory on every Muslim.

There is, however, another kind of prayer, met with in every religion, and also in Islam. This is the prayer by which a man in his hour of need supplicates God for the attainment of a particular object. The Holy Quran makes mention of this kind of prayer

in these words: "And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the supplicant, when he calls on Me.<sup>1</sup>" Again: "Or Who answers the distressed one, when he calls upon Him and removes the evil.<sup>2</sup>" That the prayer of a devout supplicant is granted is plainly stated here, a fact borne out by the sacred history of every nation, nay, by the actual experience of almost every man. Yet, the subject involves some intricate points which need explanation. Firstly, some people, like the late Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of Aligarh, do not believe in the efficacy of prayer in bringing about a desired end, and take it only as a means of solace to the heart. They think the efficacy of prayer is inconsistent with the use of earthly means for success; and hence they depend only on the external means. But this view is essentially wrong. Prayer does not preclude the use of earthly measures, it being one of the means itself, though not earthly, yet sometimes its acceptance leads us to resort to other material means than **already** known to us. By prayer we only

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1. II: 186.

2. XXVII: 62

appeal to the source of all light and knowledge to enlighten us about the means which should bring about our success; utilising at the same time all material resources which are already at our disposal. Thus prayer is *not* inconsistent with the use of external measures.

The objection sometimes raised, that even an atheist, who does not pray to or believe in the existence of God, succeeds in gaining his object, is due to a misconception about the real significance of prayer. When a man, be he an atheist, sets himself wholeheartedly to acquire a thing and leaves no stone unturned in his efforts, he is praying indirectly though not directly. As he has not been able to realize the existence of the Supreme Being, he is not in a position to pray to Him directly; but through his attempts and movements he is constantly at prayers. His very condition is a prayer. He prays through his heart's craving and repeated efforts, though not through his tongue and words. And the Merciful God, taking pity upon him, grants his prayer.

Secondly, there is a class of men, who through sluggishness, entirely depend upon

prayer, and do not take the trouble of striving for their object. The disuse of earthly means, with which God has provided us, is a sin. And such people have no right to complain against their prayer being rejected if they do not utilize the material resources at their disposal. Prayer does not preclude us from the use of external means; and the practice of all the prophets and the righteous servants of God bears it out. Prayer plus the use of earthly measures is surely a royal road to success.

It should, however, be borne in mind that some times a prayer is accepted in rejection. Man's knowledge is after all limited. He is often deceived by appearances, and runs after a thing which is not good for him. His prayer for such a thing is rejected for his own good. His case is like that of a child who taking a fancy to burning charcoal wants to have it but we do not allow him to touch it, and give him a lump of sugar instead. The Holy Quran says: "And it may be that you dislike a thing, while it is good for you and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you; and Allah knows while you do not know."<sup>1</sup>

## FASTING.

The third institution of Islam is fasting and every Muslim is enjoined to fast during the month of Ramazan. But the constantly sick, the aged and others who are physically unfit to fast are exempt. They should feed a poor man instead of fasting. The traveller also should not fast, nor a sick man during his indisposition, but they should fast when they are restored to normal conditions of life, *i.e.* after a journey is finished or recovery is gained.<sup>1</sup>

Fasting, in its origin, is a very old institution ; but Islam has given it a new meaning. Before Islam fasting was generally practised to appease an angry Deity, but in Islam, like prayer, it is the means for the moral elevation and spiritual betterment of man. The Quran makes this object clear when it enjoins fasting. "Fasting is prescribed for you . . . . so that you may avoid evil."<sup>2</sup> Thus fasting in Islam does not mean merely to abstain from eating and drinking, but from every sort of evil. In fact abstaining from food—a lawful thing under the command of God for a certain period of time is a sort of

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1. Holy Quran II : 183-184      2. II : 183



training and schooling for abstaining from unlawful things for ever. Again, by fasting we try to give up for some time our carnal desires, thus kindling the spark of Divinity in ourselves. Surely "man does not live by bread alone."

Fasting also creates in us a sort of fellowship and sympathy with those of our brethren who actually starve. It will be admitted on all hands that there are hundreds and thousands of our fellow-men, who through adverse circumstances are driven to starve, and it is our duty to help them and sympathise with them. But naturally we cannot realize the sufferings of others except through our personal experience. A wealthy man who has never the ill luck of going without his dainty dishes is not in a position to understand the miserable plight of his brethren who often go without the coarsest food. Fasting makes a man alive to the sufferings of others and stimulates him to help them. That is why the holy Prophet and his companions are reported to be exceedingly charitable in the month of Ramazan. The Muslims are expected to give alms more generously in this month; and

it cannot be denied that it goes a long way to mitigate the sufferings of humanity. It has been truly said that Islam has got a levelling effect, and that is more conspicuous during the month of fasting. A king with all his means of subsistence and stores of provisions, starves like a poor man and thus is brought face to face to the hard realities of life. From this he can learn a great lesson of sympathy for his subjects.

Physically, too, fasting has a wholesome effect on our constitution. By fasting you improve your health, and burn away all the over-growth. Your liver and stomach take one month's rest and begin to work afresh with renewed vigour and energy. The food, you take, is properly digested and assimilated to your physique.

Those who have the experience of the realm of vision and spiritual flights agree on this, that fasting quickens their spiritual faculties, and they see wonderful visions during fasting days. The explanation of this phenomenon is to be found in the fact that by the subjection of the physical faculties, spiritual power is strengthened, and one

begins to soar higher and higher in the realm of spirituality.

This all round progress and welfare of human nature aimed at by fasting has been pithily expressed in the Holy Quran by the Arabic expression *Laallakum Tattaqun* "so that you may be careful of your duty;" that is, duty to ourselves and to our fellowmen. Duty to ourselves consists in keeping our soul and body in a sound healthy state in maintaining and developing all our God-given faculties in a right proportion; while duty to our fellowmen consists in sympathising with humanity and in mitigating its sufferings.

#### ZAKAT OR POOR RATES.

Charity is one of the tender qualities of human nature which soften the heart. It is a form of inward sympathy with the poor and the needy. Every religion has preached charity; but Islam has given it the form of a regular institution, and has made it obligatory on every Muslim. Here is a brotherhood of man in which the rich are required to part with a certain portion of their wealth for the up-lift of the poor. The rich man need not make the camel pass through the eye of the needle to enter the kingdom of heaven.

He is required simply to pay a small tax for the benefit of the poor. Here again we dip ourselves in the Ocean of Divinity. In feeding the poor, we imitate God's attribute of providence. By the institution of *Zakat* or the poor rates Islam wants to ameliorate the condition of the depressed classes which is to day a great problem of India. The institution also serves the purpose of keeping an equilibrium between capital and the labour and prevents the concentration of wealth into the hands of a few. The Western world goes on dreaming of its utopian socialism, which if carried out into practice will divest society of incentive and will bring about degradation and lethargy. But Islam being a practical religion, has established a most useful institution in the form of *Zakat* which is meant to improve the status of those who are unfortunately lingering behind in the race of life. But unlike socialism it does not hamper individual incentive and ingenuity, which are essential to the progress of humanity.

Before the advent of Islam charity was considered an individual act of merit, and therefore, was performed secretly. Jesus

also advised his disciples: "But when thou doest alms let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.<sup>1</sup>" Islam, however, has improved upon it, and has permitted the giving of alms openly as well. The tremendous amount of good that is being done by the open public Funds can better be imagined than described. If the Christians abide by the advice of the "master," the whole work of evangelization will come to a stand still.

The payment of the poor rates or *Zakat* is next in importance to prayer. The Quran has mentioned it very often in conjunction with prayer. According to a saying of the Prophet *Zakat* is charity taken from the rich for the uplift of the poor. Every person is rich within the meaning of this saying who has got silver or other property to the value of approximately Rs. 50 or gold to the value of about £ 12/- On all hoarded wealth including jewelry within the above mentioned limit, which has remained in the possession of the owner for one year, *Zakat* is payable at the rate of 2½ per cent. In the case of house property the *Zakat* is payable on the income accruing from it. The

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1. Matthew VI: 3.

agriculturists are to pay  $\frac{1}{10}$  of the land produce on the very day that they gather the harvest.<sup>1</sup> The Quran has mentioned the following eight heads. For the expenditure of *Zakat*.<sup>2</sup>

1. The poor.
2. The needy.
3. Those in debt.
4. Ransoming of captives.
5. The way-farer.
6. The officials appointed for the collection, and expenditure of *Zakat*.
7. Those whose hearts are made to incline to truth.
8. The way of Allah.

The "needy" as distinguished from the "poor" are those who are capable of earning their living, yet are in need of some implements etc. to carry on their work. A person may be able to support himself, but if he is in debt, his debts may be paid off from the *Zakat* funds to make his hands free to earn a respectable living. "Captives" are the war-prisoners, and a portion of *Zakat* is

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1. Holy Quran VI : 142

2. IX : 60

meant to release them. A "way-farer" or a traveller, though in well-to-do circumstances in his own country, some times stands in need of help in a foreign land; and therefore, he is provided for in the budget of *Zakat*. The salary of officials appointed for the collection and expenditure of *Zakat* is evidently an indispensable item. The last two heads relate to the propagation of Islam. There is always a class of men who are ready to listen to the message of truth; but are handicapped by adverse circumstances. They must be given some help from *Zakat*. The "Way of Allah" means the cause of Islam, which must be espoused. At present when Islam is being made a butt of hostile criticism by the Christian and Hindu writers, Muslims are expected to spend their *Zakat* in the free publication of Islamic literature in order to vindicate the honour of their Faith; which being the universal religion of humanity should be preached throughout the world.

#### PILGRIMAGE.

Travelling is the best method for receiving education and experience. It broadens

the view and creates sympathy with humanity. That is why the Quran and the Holy Prophet have emphasised it in unmistakable terms. "Journey in the land" is the oft-repeated injunction of the Quran. The Prophet also has ordained travelling in quest of knowledge.

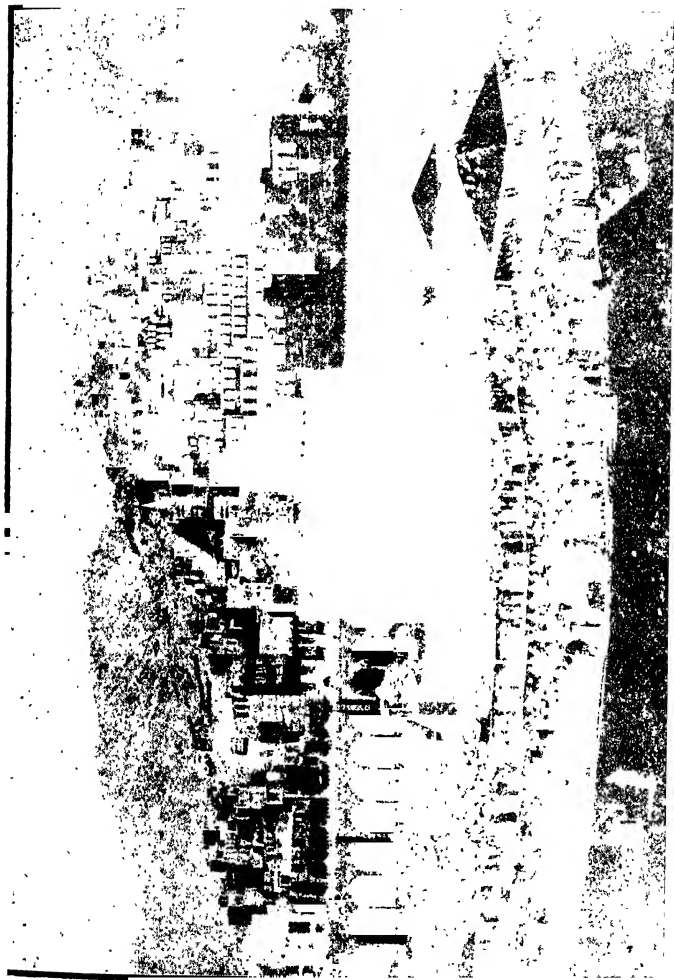
In view of the various such advantages of travelling, Islam has made the performance of pilgrimage or *Hajj*, to Mecca incumbent upon every Muslim once in life, subject to the condition that he has means to undertake the journey as well as to make provisions for those dependent on him. Security of life is also a necessary condition.

Pilgrimage represents the unique scene of man's fraternity at the sacred city of Mecca. It is true that in our daily prayers a prince and a peasant stand shoulder to shoulder, yet the difference of their costumes is sufficient to make distinction. In *Hajj*, however, we have to eliminate these differences of society as well, and we are entirely brought down to the level of whole humanity. The pilgrims who visit every year the sacred House at Mecca come from the



different countries of the world. They differ in colour, and caste; they differ in ranks and grades; they differ in speech and mode of living; yet they are fastened with the unbreakable bond of fraternity and are saturated with the true belief in the unity of God and equality of man—*Sibgatullah*, the Divine Tint. The display of wealth, of rich costumes, and of expensive clothes may make distinction in society, but the Divine wisdom which found its fullest and last exposition in Islam and which wants to do away with all these conventional differences, in order to create a universal brotherhood of man could not allow to remain the same in the levelling atmosphere of Mecca in the days of pilgrimage. Hence every pilgrim, whatever his rank and position, has to divest himself of his particular costume, before stepping into the sacred precincts of Mecca and clothe himself in seamless white sheets—*Ihram*.

In this state of *Ihram* all distinctions of wealth and position, of colour and nationality, disappear. A king and a peasant are alike and one cannot be distinguished from the other. The whole humanity assumes one uni-



**Pilgrims at the sacred house of Kaba**



form aspect before its Maker and the universal brotherhood of man is materialized.

The holy city of Mecca which is the scene of this unique gathering is known in the Islamic literature as *Ummul-Qura* i.e., the mother of cities. It is curious how the very name of the city suggests its chief feature. Just as a child has a yearning for his mother, similarly the people of different countries long for a visit to Mecca and hundreds and thousands of Muslims from the distant corners of the world gather together every year in the sacred city. It is simply wonderful how this vast ocean of humanity behaves. There is neither a police man nor a military guard and yet the whole affair is going on without any riot and disturbance. The people become quite harmless and docile, in the sacred precincts of Mecca. They leave off their evil propensities for the time being and the Kingdom of Heaven is actually established on the earth. The pilgrims become child-like in the loving arms of the "mother of cities" and do no harm to their brothers and sisters. This is the ideal state of civil life: this is the "Kingdom of Heaven" for which Jesus prayed. The dream of the master has been realized in Islm.

## LIFE AFTER DEATH.

Belief in a future life is, also one of the cardinal principles of Islam ; and the Quran has mentioned it in the very beginning. Speaking of the believers, the Holy Book says: "And they are sure of the hereafter.<sup>1</sup>" All other religions, too, believe in one form or the other in a future life ; but the mystery of it has nowhere been solved so clearly as in Islam. It is beyond the scope of this work to deal with the question in detail, but in passing I may remark that the idea of a life-after-death in Islam forms a valuable basis for the moral elevation of the world. According to Islam, we are accountable for our actions in the next life ; and surely this belief goes a long way to improve our morality. "We have made every man's actions," says the Holy Quran, "to cling to his neck, and We will bring forth to him on the resurrection day, a book which he will find wide open.<sup>2</sup>" This verse shows that the life-after-death is only an image of this world's life. It is, so to speak, a continuation of life below. We create hell and heaven with our own actions. These two different states of life-

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1. II : 4

2. XVII : 13

after-death are in fact two images of our life in this world. It is also to be noted that in the life-after death man is destined to make an infinite progress. Hell is simply a reformatory or a hospital for the sinful or the spiritually sick who after being cured enter into Heaven to make an infinite progress.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DIVINE ATTRIBUTES AND HUMAN CIVILIZATION.

The world, we live in, is a manifestation of the Divine attributes. The nature round us is pregnant with the Divine morals. Except "Allah," which is the proper name for the Supreme Being, all other words used for Him are descriptive of His various attributes which find their manifestation in nature. It is beyond the scope of this work to discuss all the attributes of God in relation to their working in Nature. Therefore, I will confine myself to the four chief attributes of the Divine Being given in the first chapter of the Quran. But before this, I must warn the reader against a misconception about the nature of God as portrayed in the Holy Book. God is spoken of in the Quran as loving, seeing, speaking, showing mercy, being displeased etc. The use of such words, however, does not in any way indicate the anthropomorphic conception of God. These words are used for the convenience of human apprehension, otherwise Allah is plainly stated to be above all material conceptions: "Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends all visions."<sup>1</sup>

Again; He is not only above all material limitations; but He is above all human conceptions expressed in metaphors and similies. "Nothing is like the likeness of Him" says the Holy Quran.<sup>1</sup> Thus the true Islamic conception of God is beyond all limitations of human perception. That is why the divines of Islam have laid down a general rule that attributes of God are independent of all material means. For instance, He does not stand in need of air for hearing or of light to see. He is independent of all such things, similarly He can create things without matter. In fact, He is the Creator of every thing in the world: "He it is who created for you all that is in the earth, and He directed himself to the Heaven, so He made them complete seven heavens and He knows all things."<sup>2</sup> Again: "Say Allah is the Creator of all things and He is the One, the Supreme."<sup>3</sup>

The old theory that matter was indestructible and hence eternal; upon which the Arya Samaj built a trinity of its own *i.e.*, the doctrine that matter, soul and God are co-eternal, has been smashed by the

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1. XLII : 2

2. Holy Quran II : 29

3. XIII : 16



recent discovery of electrons, the negative units of electricity in an atom. According to the latest investigations of science an atom, the indivisible particle of matter, is built up of "units of negative electricity, and an equal number of units of positive electricity." These two units are of very different mass; the mass of the negative unit, the electron, being only  $\frac{1}{1836}$  of that of the positive. The size of an electron is to that of an atom roughly in the ratio of a pin's head to the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. According to the Quran, God is the Creator of these units of electricity which make up the whole world.

The opening chapter of the Holy Quran after mentioning the proper name of the Divine Being, Allah, gives His four principal attributes; the first of which is that He is *Rabb*. According to Raghīb, an Arab lexicologist the word *Rabb* signifies: "the fostering of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion." This shows that the idea of evolution which is generally believed to be the product of the modern mind is summed up in the word *Rabb*. The importance of this attribute over others

is clear from the fact that it is not only the first attribute mentioned in the Holy Quran in its present arrangement occurring in the very first verse of the opening chapter; but it is the attribute mentioned in the very first revelation received by the Holy Prophet in these words: "Read with the name of your *Rabb* (Lord) who created *i.e.* every thing." Creation and evolution are closely related to each other. The attribute of creation would have been quite useless, had not the evolution worked to bring the creation to its final goal of completion. That is why the attributes of creation and evolution are mentioned side by side in the above verse. The Quran wants to point out that God has created every-thing and has put into it vast potentialities of development. Then under God's fostering care it attains gradually to its ultimate stage of perfection. And that is exactly what we see in nature. A small, tiny seed of a tree contains all the ingredients of future growth. Its roots, its trunk, its branches, its foliage, its flowers and its fruits are all condensed in that little thing called a seed. When it is put into the soil, it receives proper nourishment from

the natural elements of land, water, sunshine, air, according to the Divine laws and grows into a very big tree. And how wonderful it is that the seeds of different plants, sown in the same soil, watered from the same water, growing in the same atmosphere yield various fruits with varieties of tastes. Their tiny seeds contain not only their physical features, but their various tastes as well; which can develop only under the fostering process of nature. The Quran puts it as a sign of God : "And in the earth there are tracts side by side and gardens of grapes, and corn and palm trees, having one root and others having distinct roots; they are watered with one water, and We make some of them excel others in fruit: most surely there are signs in this for a people who understand."

The same process of evolution or *Rabubiyyat* is working in man. He is after all, in his origin, a microscopic life-germ. But this little germ, which is too small to be seen with the naked eye comprehends potentially all the faculties of man, which develop gradually as he advances in years and which make him eventually the lord of creation to rule over the earth. It is simply wonderful how

this little germ of life contains in itself, what man has attained in the domain of science and literature.

This attribute of God is the fountain-head of all human progress, material and moral. No society can exist without it. Man is social by nature. He depends for his sustenance upon others. Parents bring up their children ; and in doing that they are imitating the Divine attribute of *Rabubiyyat*. In supporting his family, a man is doing a religious duty. The Prophet is reported to have said: "He who puts a morsel into his wife's mouth, is doing an act of merit." The larger the sphere of our care and sustenance grows, the more we partake of the Divine attribute of providence. If I look to the needs of all the people living in a parish, I shall be partaking of the Divine attribute in a greater measure and will, therefore, be doing a greater merit. And if my sympathies extend still further and I take care of a whole country, I shall be doing an act of still greater merit and so on. The Quran, however, does not want to limit our out-look to the geographical boundaries, The God of Muslims is *Rabbul Alamin*, (the sustainer and nourisher of all

the worlds); and the Muslims imbuing themselves in His morals are expected to look to the needs of the whole of humanity. Those who have worked for the benefit of whole of mankind have been amply rewarded by their Lord. Their names are immortalized like that of God; because they have fully imbued themselves with the Divine attribute of providence according to their mortal capacity. Thus it will be seen that all activities, human or Divine, directed to the benefit of man are manifestations of the Divine attribute of *Rabubiyyat*.

In Christianity, however, God is characterized as *Abb*, father, a word which was constantly on the sacred lips of the gentle Nazarene. The difference in the significances of *Rabb*, and *Abb* is obvious. *Abb* denotes only paternal care and is thus very much limited in its sense as compared to the vast, all-comprehending care of *Rabb*. The Christians always pray to God for their "daily bread" which is perhaps quite in keeping with their conception of God. But Jesus has plainly told them that "man does not live by bread alone." And the Holy Quran using the word *Rabb* for God has right-

ly pointed out His moral and spiritual care bestowed upon humanity. God's sustenance is not confined only to our earthly or physical life; but it is extended to our spiritual or moral life as well. His dispensation of our spiritual needs, too, is as universal as of our material needs. He has sent His messengers and prophets to all peoples of the world with a message of truth. The Quran teaches us the catholicity of the Divine revelation which is of course a necessary corollary of His universal providence. Just as rain-water from heaven gives life to the whole earth, so has the Divine Elixer of revelation resuscitated the dead nations of the world in all times.

This universality of the Divine revelation involves the equality of man; and is a potent factor in establishing real peace among mankind, which the world so badly needs. Human civilisation will reach its zenith when all men will begin to live like brothers on this planet. This is at least the aim of Islam.

Next to *Rabb* in importance are the two Divine attributes of *Rahman* and *Rahim*, which are mentioned in the opening chapter of the Quran, just after *Rabb*; and are generally translated into English as "Beneficent" and "Merciful"

respectively. Coming from the same root, *Rahmat*, which means *tenderness requiring the exercise of beneficence*, and thus comprises the idea of *love* and *mercy*, they both are very much allied in their significance, and have a fine distinction which may be explained as follows:—*Rahman* indicates the greatest preponderance of mercy displayed all at once; while *Rahim* denotes a constant repetition of that quality. The two words are applicable to two different states of God's mercy: the first, *Rahman*, to that state when man has done nothing to deserve; but God simply out of His beneficence bestows His gifts on him; and the second, *Rahim*, when man has done something to deserve His mercy. The Holy Prophet explaining the difference of these words is reported to have said: "*Rahman* is the Beneficent God whose love and mercy are manifested in the creation of this world, and *Rahim* is the Merciful God whose love and mercy are manifested in the state that comes after" *i. e.* after the actions of man. Thus the attribute of mercy in *Rahman* is manifested before a man comes into existence in the creation of things which are essential to his life; but for which

he has done nothing to deserve them ; while the same attribute of mercy in *Rahim* is manifested, when he does something to deserve it.

If we look at this world carefully, we can realize how wonderfully these two attributes of God are working in the universe. Nature is full of the Divine treasures, for which man has done nothing. The air, the sun, the moon, the land, mountains, oceans, trees, vegetables, and in fact all elements of nature with their innumerable properties, to only some of which the human intellect has yet been able to find access, are created by *Rahman*, the Beneficent God, without any action on our part. We get free air, water, sunshine, and numerous other gifts of nature. And all of them are necessary for our life. The Divine wisdom has made the essentials of life in preponderously immeasurable magnitude while things unnecessary for life, which are needed simply for decoration and fancy are rare. The costly jewels of a king's crown are found with great difficulty; but the air on which the human life depends is in superabundance. And so is the case with every gift of nature. Its



supply is always in proportion to the degree of its utility to the human life. Thus Rahman, the Beneficent God, has provided us out of His unbounded mercy with every necessity of life; nay, He has invested nature with immense treasures and has also endowed us with intellect to make use of them in our life, without any merit on our part. And when we use our brains to find out and analyse the various properties of nature's elements in order to utilize them, *Rahim*, the Merciful God invariably crowns our efforts with success. Thus the various inventions of the modern times, the use of electricity and other locomotive powers and the wonderful discoveries in medicine are in fact due to these two attributes of God: Rahman and Rahim,

Again, in the domain of religion, it is *Rahman* who by revelation shows the right way to man to develop his faculties; and it is *Rahim* who rewards the faithful for their good deeds.

Evidently these attributes of love and mercy are indispensable for every enlightened society. We must give charity to the poor without any consideration of give-and-take.

Speaking of the pious the Quran says: "And they give food out of love for Him to the poor, and the orphan, and the captive. And say: 'we only feed for Allah's sake we desire from you neither reward nor thanks.' <sup>1</sup>" And we must also be considerate in awarding rewards to those who work for us. Thus we copy the Divine attributes of *Rahman* and *Rahim*.

The fourth attribute of God is *Malik-iyaum-id-din*, i. e., He is the "Master of the day of requital." The word *Master* explains the nature of the Divine law of retribution. It shows that God is not vindictive in His punishment. He being the Creator and Evolver is the true *Master* of every-thing; and therefore, His punishment also is characterised by a healthy, fostering influence. A master does not like to lose or spoil his servant. He is invariably keen on his reclamation and rectification. And so is God. He punishes men simply to rectify them. That is why the hell is described in the Quran as a "mother"<sup>2</sup> of the spoiled soul; because it is meant for his education and correction. There is no eternal hell in Islam. It is only a remedial measure. And

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1. LXXVI: 8-9

2. CI: 9

God can also forgive his men without being guilty of injustice; because He is the *Master* and not a mere judge. Such is the Divine law of retribution enunciated by the Quran, and decidedly the most enlightened view of our modern law is based upon it. We do not penalise people to gratify the passion of vengeance. We want only reformation. Are we not copying the Divine attribute of retribution in framing the canons of a civilized Government, which invariably keeps in view that the law must be deterrant and reformatory?

Thus the reader will see that the Divine attributes are the true nursery for human civilization. We do not glorify God with these names to please Him. We do not sing His praises like a poet who sings his panegyrics to a potentate to tackle his fancy or gratify his love for praise. We remember God and His attributes to mould our character after them. Thus the Divine glorification lies in the human edification. And this is *the* object of religion.

It should, however, be borne in mind that the attribute of mercy is the most predominant of all the Divine attributes. The

Quran has laid the greatest stress, in explicit terms, on the immeasurable vastness of God's mercy. I quote only a few examples from the Holy Book.

(1) "He has ordained mercy on Himself."<sup>1</sup>

(2) "Your lord has ordained mercy on Himself."<sup>2</sup>

(3) "Your Lord is the Lord of all encompassing mercy"<sup>3</sup>

(4) "And My mercy encompasses all things"<sup>4</sup>

(5) "O My servants who have acted extravagantly against their own souls do not despair of the mercy of God; surely God forgives the sins altogether"<sup>5</sup>

(6) "O Lord thou embracest all things in mercy and knowledge"<sup>6</sup>

(7) "In the grace of God and His mercy they should rejoice"<sup>7</sup>

1. VI : 12

2. VI : 54

3. VI : 148

4. VII : 156

5. XXXIX : 53

6. XL : 7

7. X : 58

## CHAPTER V.

### THE REFORMATION WROUGHT BY ISLAM.

They say it is darkest just before dawn and so was the world before Islam. The Quran summed up the whole situation in these words: "Corruption has appeared in the land and sea on account of what hands of men have wrought."<sup>1</sup> The history of every nation bears this out. A dismal gloom overshadowed the whole of human race; and darkness prevailed every-where. The old religions and ancient civilizations were spent bullets. Judaism, Hinduism, Brahmanism and the Greeco-Roman civilizations had all lost their influence on human life. Christianity, the last revealed religion, was itself decrepit and corrupt."<sup>2</sup> The simple religion of Jesus was rent with schisms. It reverted to heathenism under the influence of the pagan cult of Rome. The Church had substituted the "puerilities of superstition for the pure and expansive faith of early ages." The social and moral condition of the world was also at its lowest ebb. Every country was deplorably sunk to moral depravity. Persia,

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1. XXX: 41

2. Muir's *Life of Mu'hammad* p. XCV.

once the seat of ancient culture, was in process of decay. The fire of zoroastrianism was extinct. It burnt in temples only; but not in the hearts of the people. Religion was only a lip profession having no bearing on practical life. The worship of the true God was replaced by the Chaldaeo-Magian cult. The old faith was split into various sects and creeds, which fanned the fire of intolerance.

The later kings of the Sassanide dynasty were given up to debauchery and licentiousness. They enjoyed absolute authority over the persons and property of their subjects, who had no rights and no voice in the government of the country. The height of moral depravity was reached when Mazdak, in the beginning of the sixth century, ordered that all men were partners in riches and women "just as they are in fire, water and grass; private property was not to exist, each man was to enjoy or endure good and bad lots of the world."<sup>1</sup> Marriage with sisters and other blood relatives was deemed lawful.

Woman was only a slave to the caprice of man. The Persians recognised no laws in sex relations. They would marry their

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1. Ameer Ali's *Spirit of Islam* p. XXXI

nearest kindred ; and would divorce their wives whenever they liked. Concubinage was also practised as a social institution. In short, rank immorality was prevailing all over Persia.

India, once the centre of old philosophy, presented the same dreadful picture. Buddhism was replaced by Brahmanism which had all the evils of priest-craft. Idolatry had taken a deep root in society and heinous things were ascribed even to what people worshipped as gods. Class distinction was rife ; and the caste system, which made invidious difference between man and man, was rigidly in force. Wealth and knowledge were deemed as the sole property of Brahmans and Chhatris ; while the rest of humanity was treated as slaves. The Shudras, for instance, were subjected to every sort of humiliation. They were mere serfs, having no right at all. They were not allowed even to listen to the *Vedas*, and were doomed to perpetual servitude and ignorance. Evil had got such a great hold on Indian society ; that even virtues were painted in darkest colour. As in Persia, partnership in women was also practised

here, under the teachings of *shaktakmat*; then in prime in India. "A *shaktak* priest could, of right, command the company of others' wives for his pleasure. Such demands were willingly obeyed, and the brides usually passed the first week of their honeymoon in the company of the high-priests. It was an act of virtue, and earned in their sight divine grace enough to bless their wedded life. The night of Shivratri, a Hindu festival, occasioned in its celebration an exhibition of the worst type of brutality, when, under the influence of women and wine, even incestuous connections failed to excite any horror, since, indeed, the *Shaktak mantras* (sacred hymns) chanted on the occasion ennobled everything foul and mean. If a conception of the Deity in any class of people rightly mirrors their conception of virtue (and it does, for the Deity everywhere and always focuses in Himself all that appears noble and good to His votaries) the Hindu gods of the time indicate the very worst type of morality then obtaining in India; for we find the lives and exploits of those Indian deities teeming with immorality."<sup>1</sup> China,

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1. Kh. Kamal-ud Din's *Ideal Prophet* p. 27.



Egypt and other parts of the eastern world were also in the same plight. All were hopelessly given to vice and degeneration.

In Europe, the mighty Empire of Rome was tottering. It was counting the last days of its glory. The downfall of the Empire, as is always the case, was due to the moral and social depravity of the people. The Romans had all the vices, which are generally followed by wealth and power. They had become selfish and greedy, immoral and cruel. Wealth and pleasure were the be-all-and-the-end-all of their lives. The old Stoic philosophy, which discarded the pleasures and the pains of the world was replaced by the worship of Mamon ; and the people were sunk to the abyss of worldliness. They lived in fashionable villas, and led most luxurious lives. They spent most of their time in baths, which were so many haunts of immorality. They indulged in the "moral pestilence," and references to this were openly made in the parliamentary speeches. The extreme luxury of the rich offered a contrast to the misery of the masses, who were labouring under abject poverty. The middle class, and the free

population of the villages and towns were ground to the earth by the tyranny of the Roman aristocracy. The condition of the slaves, was beyond description. They were treated most ruthlessly like animals. Three hundred lashes was the usual punishment for trivial faults. Sometimes they were thrown into a pond, which usually every wealthy man had in his courtyard, to be devoured by fishes. Sometimes they were made to fight with wild beasts in an open arena to be torn into pieces. The Romans did not believe in a revealed religion. They were purely a pagan people. But with the conversion of Constantine, Christianity became the state religion, and paganism faded away, yet Christianity failed to exercise any wholesome influence on the masses, became the Church itself was rent with many schisms. "After the extinction of paganism" says Gibbon "the Christians in peace and piety might have enjoyed their solitary triumph. But the principle of discord was alive in their bosom, and they were more solicitous to explore the nature than to practise the laws of their founder."<sup>1</sup> The Church of Jesus

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1. Ameer Ali's *Spirit of Islam* p. XLII.

in these circumstances, could not raise Europe from this abyss of degradation and darkness. The social and political condition of the European countries was simply deplorable. Freedom of thought was no more. The "reign of Christ" was celebrated by the sacrifice of heretics. The beautiful teachings of Jesus (peace be upon him) were forgotten and the devil-in-man was let loose. "In the streets of Alexanderia before the eyes of the civilized world, the noblest woman of antiquity was slaughtered with nameless horrors by a Christian who bears the name of saint in the annals of Christendom, and who in modern times, had found an apologist. The eloquent pages of Draper furnish a vivid account of the atrocious crime which will always remain one of the greatest blots on Christianity. A beautiful, wise, and virtuous woman, whose lecture room was full to overflowing with the wealth and fashion of Alexanderia, was attacked, as she was coming out of her academy, by a mob of the zealous professors of Christianity. Amidst the fearful yelling of these defenders of the faith she was dragged from her chariot, and in the public

street stripped naked. Paralysed with fear she was haled into an adjourning church, and there killed by the club of a saint. The poor naked corpse was outraged and then dismembered ; but the diabolical crime was not completed until they had scraped the flesh from the bones with oyster shells and cast the remnants into the fire. Christendom honoured with canonisation the fiend who instigated this terrible and revolting atrocity and the blood of martyred Hypatia was avenged only by the sword of Amru.”<sup>1</sup>

The state of things in Constantinople was still worse. A harlot sat on the throne and shared the honours of the state with the emperor. Theodora's name was notorious for her disgraceful trade among the dissolute inhabitants of the city. But now she was adored as the queen by the whole of gentry. The emperor was a mere puppet in her hands ; and the Empire was ruined by her cruelties. The seditious outbreaks and political risings were the order of the day ; which were crushed by the government with most drastic measures. On such occasions every law was trampled

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1. Ameer Ali's *Spirit of Islam* pp. XLII-XLIII.

under foot. Even churches were polluted with atrocious murders. While the Prophet of Islam was yet in his infancy, a most virtuous emperor was massacred in Constantinople with his children and wife. He was dragged out from his palace, and his five sons were murdered one by one before his eyes. Then the emperor himself was executed. The empress and her daughter were subjected to various cruelties and were beheaded on the same spot which had been stained with the imperial blood. The ruthless treatment, meted out to the friends of the imperial victims, will always remain a blot on the face of the human civilization. "Their eyes were pierced, their tongues were torn from the root, their hand and feet were amputated; some expired under the lash; others in the flames; others again were transfixed with arrows."<sup>1</sup> Such were the miseries and misfortune under which the people of the world were suffering before the advent of Islam. "A simple speedy death" says Gibbon, "was a mercy which they could rarely obtain".

But Arabia was perhaps the darkest

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1. Ameer Ali's *Spirit of Islam* p. XLIV.

spot in the whole world in this dark age. The moral depravity of the Arabs was past description. They were passionately fond of drinking and gambling. Every household kept a considerable quantity of wine in store, and indulged in drinking at least five times a day. Singing and dancing was practised by a class of their women, who earned their living by prostitution; and yet were held in great esteem by society. These women used to give receptions which were largely attended by the gentry. Polygamy was practised to an unlimited extent. Despite the plurality of wives a man could keep illicit intercourse with as many women as he liked. Love-stories were openly narrated and references were made to the ladies of high families in love-songs. The worst type of obscene language was used to express sex relations.

Woman had no status in the pre-Islamic Arab society. She had no right to inherit the property of her husband or parents. In fact she was treated as an animal. A widow was deemed as part and parcel of her deceased husband's property and therefore automatically passed into the use of the heir. Thus a son could give

her to any-one else in marriage after his father's death, as she was looked upon as an integral portion of the inheritance. The practice of divorce was very common in Arabia. A man could divorce his wife a hundred times and could take her back within a specified period called *Iddat*. She was absolutely at the mercy of the husband who often ruled over her with an iron hand. Sometimes he would cut off conjugal relations and would swear never to go near her. Sometimes he would say that he would look upon her as his "real mother," and would thus break asunder the matrimonial tie. This form of divorce was known as "*Istizhar*" and was frequently resorted to by the Arabs. The atrocious and inhuman practice of infanticide was also in vogue. Female infants were buried alive even by their callous-hearted mothers who in some cases were bound to perpetrate this heinous crime by a pledge taken at the time of marriage.

The Arabs were polytheists. No doubt they believed in the unity of the Supreme Deity, but this belief was nothing more than a lip-profession. They looked upon idols and

goddesses as the functionaries of the Almighty God who had entrusted them with various functions in the Universe. They thought that the Divine favour could not be obtained nor the Divine wrath appeased but through the intercession of the idol whom they named *Allat*. Therefore they prostrated before their goddesses and invoked their blessings. Besides, they adored the air, the sun, the moon and the stars and looked upon them as the controllers of their destinies. They would even worship unhewn pieces of stone, trees and sandheaps. When on a journey they would usually pick up pieces of stone to make a hearth; and after cooking their food, would pull out any of these and worship it as a god. In addition to the 360 idols kept in the sacred house of *Kaba*, the house that was assigned the service of one God, every tribe had an idol of its own. The *Lat*, the *Manat* and the *Uzza* being the chief deities were universally worshipped.

Idolatory must breed superstition, and so it did with the Arabs. They believed in the existence of genii and spirits; they thought that the stars and angels were the daughters of Allah; they held



that the human soul hovers over the grave after death. Among some tribes a camel was slaughtered on the tomb, or allowed to die of starvation, with the belief that the deceased would ride on its back in the next life. Some believed that the soul, assumed after death the body of a bird called *Hama* or *Sada*. If the deceased was a victim of some violent death, the bird hovered over the grave and kept on crying "*Askini*," "Give me a drink," until the murder had been avenged. They had firm faith in oracles which they consulted with pointless arrows called *Azlam*.

Politically, Arabia before the time of the Prophet was in a state of isolated chaos. It had no political relations with the rest of the world. "Hitherto it has lain," says Syed Amir Ali, "in silence and solitude, isolated from the great nations of the world, unaffected by their wars and their polity." It had no central power to deal with foreign affairs or negotiate with the governments of other countries. Its immunity from foreign invasion was mainly due to the fact that there was no central authority to be made the object

of subjugation. The nomad tribes of Arabia roamed over the desert all the year round setting up their tents wherever they found water to drink and forage to feed their cattle. The whole country was divided into small principalities, each clan forming a separate independent political unit, and having a *Shaikh* as its head-man, whose chief function was to lead his people in a battle against a hostile tribe. But there was no central authority to enforce law and order; nor any tribunal to administer justice. Every one was at liberty to vindicate his right by the sheer force of his arm. This led to a constant warfare among various tribes. The peevish nature of the Arabs was ever ready to pick up quarrels. Trifles, such as a joke or a taunt, would provoke them to cut each other's throats, and would thus cause a series of endless skirmishes extending from generation to generation and resulting sometimes in the destruction of a whole tribe. The defeated in these wars were often reduced to eternal bondage by the victor. The Quran has tersely but very appropriately summed up this deplorable condition in these words. "You (the

Arabs) were on the verge of the pit of fire.”<sup>1</sup> But Islam came with a unifying force. It welded together the heterogeneous elements of the Arab population into a homogeneous whole and made it a strong nation. The Quran says: “And remember the favour of Allah on you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts, so by His favour you became brethren.”<sup>2</sup> This is admitted by Muir:

“The first peculiarity, then, which attracts our attention is the subdivision of the Arabs into innumerable bodies, governed by the same code of honour and morals, exhibiting the same manners, speaking for the most part the same language, but each independent of the others; restless and often at war amongst themselves; and even when united by blood or by interest; ever ready on some insignificant cause to separate and give way to an implacable hostility. Thus at the era of Islam the retrospect of Arabian history exhibits, as in the kaleidoscope, an ever-varying state of combination and repulsion, such as had hitherto rendered abortive any attempt at

a general union . . . . . The problem had yet to be solved, by what force these tribes could be subdued, or drawn to one common centre; and it was solved by Mohammad, who struck out a political system of his own, universally acceptable because derived from elements common to all Arabia; vigorous, because based upon the energy of a new religious life." <sup>1</sup>

Different attempts for the reformation of Arabia were made before Islam but with no success. Judaism and Christianity were the two revealed religions that prevailed on the border of Arabia. About the 5th century B. C. the Jews being driven out from their homelands by Nebuchadrezzar, found shelter in Arabia, where they first introduced their religion. They succeeded in gaining some converts, and before the advent of the Prophet, Judaism was professed in Yaman by a considerable portion of the people. In the 3rd century B. C. the king of Yaman, Lu Nawas, embraced the Jewish religion; which gave an impetus to the proselytising efforts of the Jews. Apparently Judaism had a fair chance of

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1. Muir's *Life of Muhammad* p. XCIV.

appealing to the Arab mind, because the Jews have a family tie with the Arabs, both coming from the same stock. Both held the patriarch Abraham in great esteem, whose memory was ever kept green by the sacred house of *Kaba*—the religious centre of the whole of Arabia. The conversion of the king of Zaman had made the Jewish religion a state religion. But in spite of all this, Arabia as a whole remained idolatrous as ever, unaffected by the unity of Godhead introduced by the Jews. Then came Christianity with a new gospel of its own. Its conception of divinity was just like that of the polytheists of Arabia. Its other dogmas too were singularly appealing to the Arab mind, because they dispensed with the necessity of law, and thus particularly suited a people who never knew the restrictions of a code of life. Above all, Christianity had the advantage of temporal power. The Roman Empire to the north, the Abyssinian kingdom to the west and the hold which the Church had got with the states of Hira; and Ghassan—were all in favour of the spread of Christianity. But inspite of this, it gained a

very small success in Najran and in some parts of Arabia, leaving the peninsula to the original religion of idol-worship. "After five centuries of Christian evangelization," says Muir, "we can point to but a sprinkling here and there of Christians—Bani Haris of Najran ; the Bani Hanifa of Al-Yemama, some of the Bani Taj at Tayma, and hardly any more. Judaism, vastly powerful, had exhibited spasmodic effort of proselytism but, as an active and converting agent the Jewish faith was no longer operative. In fine, viewed thus in a religious aspect, the surface of Arabia had been now and then gently rippled by the feeble efforts of Christianity ; the sterner efforts of Judaism had been occasionally visible in a deeper and more troubled current, but the tide of indigenous idolatry and of Ishmaelite superstition, settling from every quarter with an unbroken and an unebbing surge towards the *Kaba*, gave ample evidence that the faith and worship of Mecca held the Arab mind in a rigorous and indisputed thralldom."<sup>1</sup>

The third religious movement which

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1. Muir's *Life of Muhammad* p. XCVII.

sprang up in Arabia itself before the advent of Islam was that of *Hanifs*. These people professed the unity of God and despised the idolatry. However, they had nothing to do with the social reform of Arabia. All that they aimed at was the supplanting of idolatry by Unitarianism. The Arabs themselves were Unitarian in a sense; as they believed in one Supreme Deity. The *Hanfi* school of thought, therefore, presented no new thing to them. But Arabia proved adamant to this movement as well. It remained stuck as ever to the deep-rooted idolatry; and the *Hanfi* school failed in its programme which was not very ambitious. Thus all earthly attempts for the reformation of Arabia were brought to nothing.

But "Allah gives life to the earth after its death" says the Holy Quran. In these very circumstances the Prophet inaugurated his mission and the success he achieved will ever stand unique in the history of the human race. He brought about a complete and thorough reformation of the whole of Arabia. He raised the wild children of the desert from the abyss of degradation

to the zenith of civilization and prosperity. He emancipated them from the clutches of ignorance, superstition, idolatry and moral depravity. He eradicated their long standing habits of gambling and drinking and made the Arabs strict teetotallars. It is related that when prohibition was proclaimed, people broke into pieces the pots of wine ; and it flowed like rain-water in the streets of Medina. He knit the conflicting and jarring elements of Arab society with ties of love and fraternity, and thus put an end to the constant warfare that had proved a curse for the Arabs. He liberated woman from her traditional bondage ; and gave her an equal status with man. He abolished infanticide and slavery, and thus established the equality of man. He accomplished the freedom of conscience and proclaimed : "There is no compulsion in religion."<sup>1</sup> This all round transformation of Arabia, *the* Arabia which we have just described, will ever be deemed as the greatest miracle of Islam. Even Sir William Muir has to admit this :—"During the youth of Muhammad, the aspect of the peninsula was strongly conservative ; perhaps



reform was never at any period more hopeless. Causes are sometimes conjured up to account for results produced by an agent apparently inadequate to effect them. Muhammed arose, and forth-with the Arabs were aroused to a new and a spiritual faith." <sup>1</sup> Further on he says:—"The prospects of Arabia before the rise of Muhammad were as unfavourable to religious reform as to political union or national regeneration. The formation of the Arab faith was deep-rooted idolatry, which for centuries had stood proof, with no palpable symptom of decay, against every attempt at evangelization from Egypt and Syria."

Thus the Holy Prophet was successful in effecting reformation of a people who were admittedly incorrigible and who had baffled all previous attempts both external and internal at their regeneration. Is it not a conclusive proof of the fact that it was the Divine hand that was working behind him. Muhammad (peace be upon him) accomplished single handed in the span of only two decades what nations could not do in centuries. And all that was done simply through

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1. *Life of Muhammad* p. XCVII.

the moral and spiritual force of the Prophet. His religion has got the self same influence. Even now, it can vivify dead nations, provided it is practised.

I cannot, however, conclude this chapter without saying a word about the deep debt of gratitude which the whole of humanity owes to Islam. We have already seen that before Islam mankind was entirely given up to the worst type of polytheism, which in its train brought about death, moral intellectual and spiritual. But the world is different to-day. Polytheism is decidedly on the wane and minotheism in the ascendant. Even the orthodox Trinitarian and the idol worshippers of old schools are finding apologies for their deep-rooted idolatry. They take pains to explain away their polytheistic tendencies and wish to coincide their beliefs with the unity of God. The whole credit of this naturally goes to the Prophet of Islam, who taught the doctrine of Unity in its purest form and placed it on firm footing. But for Muhammad the Unitarians would have lost their faith in the oneness of God. Jesus, no doubt, came with the same message ; but his religion fell a helpless prey to heathenism.

It lost its purity. Will not my Unitarian friends in England consider this aspect of the question and pay their allegiance to Islam which stands for perfect Unity. In India, the Arya Samaj is greatly indebted to Islam. This new and reformed sect of Hinduism has borrowed many things from our faith. It condemns idol-worship and priestcraft, it sanctions widow marriage and conversion from other religions and all this is a true copy of Islamic doctrines. In America, the prohibition of wine is a brilliant triumph of Islamic teachings. In England and in fact in all Christian countries, the Islamic institutions of divorce and polygamy are practically in vogue. "Peace" and "universal peace" is the cry of the whole world and Islam is admittedly the religion of peace. Humanity is saturated with a cosmopolitan spirit. It is moving towards universalism. And it is exactly what the Quran taught over thirteen hundred years ago :—

"People are a single nation, so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the book with truth, that it might judge between people in that in which they differed ; and

none but the very people who were given it differed about it after clear arguments had come to them, revolting among themselves; so Allah has guided, by His will those who believe, to the truth about which they differed; and Allah guides whom He pleases to the right path.”<sup>1</sup>

Again, dogmatic Christianity is no more the religion of the West. The Modernist church of England has declared in explicit terms :—

(1) Jesus did not claim Divinity for himself. He may have allowed himself to be called Messiah, but never, in any critically well attested saying is there anything which suggests that his conscious relation to God is other than that of a man towards God. The speeches of the fourth Gospel, where they go beyond the synoptic conception, cannot be regarded as history.

(2) It follows from his admission that Jesus was in the fullest sense a man, and that he had not merely a human body, but a human soul, intellect and will.

(3) It is equally unorthodox to suppose

that the human soul of Jesus pre-existed. There is simply no basis for such a doctrine unless we say that all human souls exist before their birth in the world, but that is not the usually accepted catholic position.

(4) The Divinity of Christ does not of necessity imply virgin birth or any other miracle. The virgin birth, if it could be historically proved, would be no demonstration of Christ's Divinity, nor would the disproof of it throw any doubt on that doctrine.

(5) The Divinity of Christ does not imply omniscience. There is no more reason for supposing that Jesus of Nazareth knew more than his contemporaries about the true scientific explanation of the mental disease which current belief attributed to diabolic possession. than that he knew more about the authorship of the Pentateuch or the Psalms. It is difficult to deny that he entertained some anticipations about the future which history has not verified.<sup>1</sup>

But these Modernists are repeating the verdict of the Quran which has clearly said that Jesus preached the unity of God :—

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1. Kh. Kamalud-Din's *Sources of Christianity* p.p. 45-46





“And when Allah will say : O Jesus son of Mary ! did you say to men, Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah, he will say : Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to (say). If I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it ; Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind ; surely Thou art the great knower of the unseen things.

“I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with : That serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou art the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things.”<sup>1</sup>



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE POLITICAL SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Islam as its very name signifies is a religion of peace and love. It stands for liberty and democracy. The Quran has laid down the foundation of democratic government. Speaking of Muslims it says: "And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer and their government is by counsel among themselves and who spend out of what We have given them."<sup>1</sup> The Holy Prophet would invariably consult his companions, who, as it were, formed a council of state, on the important affairs of the Muslim common wealth, and would always abide by the advice of the majority even at the expense of his personal opinion. The following incident in connection with the battle of Uhud will illustrate this: "In the year 3 A.H. the army of Quraish marched out towards Medina and on Thursday, the 9th of Shawwal, encamped at the foot of Uhud, a hill three miles north of Medina. They took possession of the pastures of Medina; luxuriant crops were cut down to serve as forage for the horses, and camels were let loose to graze in the fields and devastate them.

The next day, Friday, the 10th of Shawwal, the Prophet summoned together his companions to discuss what was the best course to adopt. It was his habit to take counsel, before every great undertaking, with his friends. He related some of his visions. He saw that his sword was somewhat broken at the point. This was interpreted to portend some injury to his own person. He saw also that he had covered his body with a coat of mail. This was taken to signify that they should better keep within the fortifications of Medina. Another vision in which cows were seen being slaughtered was interpreted to mean damage to his people. On the strength of these visions, the Prophet was of opinion that they should not venture out to meet the enemy in open conflict, but rather stay within the four walls of Medina and repulse their onslaughts. Companions of age and mature judgment were all at one with him in his suggestion. Even 'Abdullah-bin-Ubayy, who had embraced Islam hypocritically after the battle of Badr, held the same view. But the majority, consisting chiefly of passionate youths, inclined towards giv-

ing the enemy a manly battle. Keeping within the walls, they argued, would carry an impression of their weakness and embolden the enemy. Moreover, it was shocking to their sense of self-respect to watch with complaisance their fields being laid waste. Out of deference for the opinion of the majority, the Prophet yielded to their plan, and, putting on his armour, marched out of Medina about sunset, at the head of a party of 1000 strong men, among whom were only two horsemen and a hundred armed men.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus according to Islam public affairs are to be settled by the public, a verity which is wrongly attributed to the modern mind. A close examination of the political conditions under the immediate successors of the Prophet bring before our eyes a popular government with an elected chief of limited powers.

In the early days of Islam when the Prophet and the handful of his follower were ruthlessly persecuted and there was no earthly hope of the ascendancy of Islam, the Quran made a mighty prophecy about

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1. *Muhammad the Prophet* p.p. 133-134

the establishment of the Muslim Empire in the following words :—

“Allah has promised to them who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before them and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which, He had chosen for them, and He will most certainly after their fear, give them security in exchange. They shall serve Me and whoever is ungrateful after this, these it is who are the transgressors.”<sup>1</sup>

The above passage gives the chief characteristics of the Muslim rule *viz.*, (1) it will be entrusted into the hands of the pious and the good, (2) it will establish religious freedom, (3) it will change fear and unrest into security and peace, and (4) it will last as long as Muslims remain faithful to God, but if they become “ungrateful” they will be dealt with as “transgressors.” This Divine promise was fulfilled in its every detail. The Muslim kingdom was established first in Arabia, which subsequently grew into a world empire. Fear and per-

secution was replaced by security and peace. Religious freedom which was extinct reigned supreme in the whole of the Muslim Empire. The anarchy which broke out after the Prophet's demise was also successfully handled by Abu Bakr, the first Caliph. The immediate successors of the Prophet who are known as rightly directed caliphs in Islamic history were ideal sovereigns. The Muslim power reached its zenith in the time of Umar, the second Caliph. The reigns of Usman and Ali had bright features of their own. So long as the Muslims fulfilled the conditions laid down in the above text of the Quran, they were the masters of the world. But when they became "ungrateful" the Divine judgment was pronounced.

The spirit of Islam in practical politics can be judged from the historic charter granted by the Prophet to the Christians of Najran. This document is a magna charta of security and liberty; and runs thus:—"To the Christians of Najran and the neighbouring territories the security of God and the pledge of His Prophet are extended for their lives, their religion and their property to the present as well as the absent

and others besides ; there shall be no interference with the practice of their faith or their observances ; nor any change in their rights or privileges ; no bishop shall be removed from his bishopric, nor any monk from his monastery nor any priest from his priesthood, and they shall continue to enjoy everything great and small as heretofore, no image or cross shall be destroyed. They shall not oppress or be oppressed, they shall not practise the rights of blood vengeance as in the Days of Ignorance. No tithes shall be levied from them nor shall they be required to furnish provisions for the troops.”<sup>1</sup>

Has any conquering or ruling race given its subject nations a nobler or more liberal guarantee than the above charter. The most civilized governments of our day are crushing their subjects under heavy taxes. But the Prophet levies no tithes on the Christians of Najran : nor are they required to pay for military expenditure. The British Government in India has yet to learn this lesson from Islam.

As for religious liberty, it is granted in

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1. *Futuhul Buldan* p. 65.

the fullest measure. The Christians are permitted to carry their images and crosses, to exercise their religion in the way they like and to maintain their bishoprics and monastries. The Prophet could not do otherwise in the face of the Quranic words: "There is no compulsion in religion." This verse gives men perfect freedom of conscience. No Muslim can legitimately encroach upon the religious convictions of a non-Muslim or of a Muslim. The widely prevailing misconception, that Islam provides a death sentence for those who desert it, has no foundation at all; and is diametrically opposed to the clear teachings of the Quran which says:

"And whoever of you turns back from his religion then he dies, while an unbeliever—these it is whose deeds shall go for nothing in this world and the hereafter.<sup>1</sup>

"O you who believe! should one of you turn back from his religion; then God will bring a people. He shall love them and they too shall love Him.<sup>2</sup>

"Those who disbelieve after their believing, then increase in disbelief, their repent-

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1. II: 217

2. V: 54

ance shall not be accepted and these are they that go astray." <sup>1</sup>

Again, the Quran speaks of a plan of the Jews to adopt Islam first and then desert it with a view to create an impression that Islam was not a religion worth having. Such a scheme would never have entered into their heads, while living under the Muslim Government in Medina, if apostacy would have been punishable with death according to the Quran. This misconception seems to have arisen from the fact that people who after apostacy joined the enemy's army were treated as enemies; and if such an apostate killed a Muslim, he was put to death, not of course for the change of religion, but for his committing a murder.

Islam sanctions perfect freedom of conscience. Christians and Jews were never molested for their faith. They enjoyed perfect liberty in the exercise of their religion. If "reasons of state" might have led a weak sovereign, here and there, to make departure from this general rule, and display certain amount of intolerance in the name of religion, Islam cannot be held responsi-



ble for it. No nation on the earth has been absolutely free from bad kings. Generally speaking, however, Muslim sovereigns have invariably acted on the precepts of the Quran and the Prophet in safeguarding the interests and religious freedom of their non-Muslim subjects. The accusation that Muslim rulers have been guilty of converting temples and churches into mosques is absolutely unfounded. Muslim sovereigns, on the other hand, have been according to the teachings of the Quran, the defenders and the custodians of churches and synagogues. It is a religious duty of Muslims to defend and maintain the shrines of every religion. The Holy Quran says, "Had there not been Allah's repelling, some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques."<sup>1</sup>

It is significant that mosques are mentioned last of all. In the reign of Mamun we hear of eleven thousand of Christian churches, besides hundreds of synagogues and fire-temples within the empire. This enlightened monarch, who has been repre-

sented through bigotry and fanaticism, as a bitter enemy of Christians included in his council the representatives of all communities under his sway—Muslims, Jews, Christians, Sabeans and Zorastrians,—whilst the rights and privileges of the Christian hierarchy were carefully regulated and guaranteed.”<sup>1</sup>

Umar the Caliph after the conquest of Egypt did not only preserve in tact the property, dedicated to churches; but also continued the allowances sanctioned by the former government for the support of the priests.

Can religious toleration go further? As a matter of fact, the word toleration is inadequate to indicate the large-heartedness, which Islam inculcates for other faiths, and which Muslim rulers translated into practice. The Christians themselves have been constrained to admit the magnanimity of the Islamic rule. The Patriarch of Merv writing a letter to Simeon the Bishop of Fars, in the reign of the Caliph Usman observes:—

“The Arabs who have been given by God the kingdom of the earth do not attack the Christian faith. On the contrary, they help

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1. *The Spirit of Islam* p. 247.

us in our religion, they respect our God and our saints and bestow gifts on our churches and monastries."

The Moghuls in India, and the Moors, in Spain are well-known for their grants in land and cash to maintain the churches and temples. India after seven centuries of Muslim rule is still teeming with the Hindu shrines, which have been invariably the recipients of the imperial grants from the Moghul emperors of Delhi. In our own days, too, Muslim princes of India are a living testimony to Islamic toleration and generosity. The Nizam of Hyderabad has recently given a donation of one lac of rupees to the educational institution of Sir Rabindranath Tagore. Here I must quote what I wrote in the *Islamic World* for August 1929:—

"His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad is the greatest Muslim ruling chief in India and has got vast dominions under his sway. But His Exalted Highness' generous gifts have always been showered over his subjects indiscriminately without the least distinction of colour and creed. The shrines and mosques, the Hindu

institutions and the Muslim colleges and *madrassas* are all alike benefitted by the liberal grants of His Exalted Highness, who has a Hindu as his Prime minister. In a recent unfortunate quarrel between the Sikhs and the Muslims over a *Gurdawara* His Exalted Highness has ordered that a European Judge should try the case and that the *Gurdawara* (Sikh shrine) should be well guarded by the Police. His Exalted Highness has also pointed out in his *Firman* that in the *Daulat-i-Asifyya*, the policy of the Government is of strict equity and justice between the different classes of its peoples without any regard of caste, colour and creed. Need we say that in doing so the Nizam is walking in the foot steps of his great predecessors who invariably administered justice with strict impartiality and were, therefore, loved and revered by all their subjects alike?

“Next comes the young ruler of Bahawalpur which is the premier Muslim State in the Punjab, and has got an area equal to that of Italy. His Highness the Nawab Sahib of Bahawalpur is one of those enlightened ruling chiefs of India, who have a profound

sympathy with their subjects without the distinction of caste and creed. His Highness like his great ancestors of Abbaside dynasty is an embodiment of religious tolerance and love for knowledge. He has recently issued a *Firman* giving orders for the erection of a platform on the spot where the great Gru of Jains died at Dera, in Sammat 1329, and also for the construction of a public inn in the same town for the comfort of the visitors of the sacred place. This speaks eloquently of His Highness' generosity and magnanimity. The State Engineer of Bahawalpur is busy in preparing the plans of these constructions which will be, so to speak, the two monuments of religious tolerance of His Highness and his ministers."

In the administration of justice the Muslim sovereigns were remarkably impartial. The words of the Quran—"if you judge, judge between them with equity"—formed their guiding principle in state affairs. "The blood of the *Zimmi* (*i. e.* non-Muslim subjects) is," said Ali "like the blood of the Muslim." With a view to specially protect the rights of the non-Muslim subjects, the Caliphs at Bagdad ; and the Muslim monarchs of Cordova created

a particular department; the head of which was called *Katibul Fihhazeh*. in Baghdad and *Katibuz-zimam* in Spain. No Muslim could acquire the land of the *zimmi* even by purchase. "Neither the Imam nor the Sultan could dispossess a *zimmi* of his property." In the punishment of crimes, there was no difference between the ruler and the ruled. According to the Islamic law, if a *Zimmi* is killed by a Muslim the latter is liable to the death sentence as in the reverse case. The most civilized governments of our day can take the Muslim administration as their model. A very interesting incident, which took place in the region of Umar and which shows the absolute equality of all men in Islam may here be narrated. Jabala the of King Ghassanides embraced Islam, and proceeded to Medina to pay his formal homage to the Caliph. He entered the city with royal pomp and circumstance and was received with much consideration and esteem. Yet while performing the *Tawaf* (circuit) round the *Kaba* a humble pilgrim, who was also performing the same religious duty, accidentally dropped his dress on the shoulders

of the king Jabala turned round furiously; and struck him a severe blow which knocked out the poor man's teeth. The injured man came to the Caliph and prayed for redress. He sent for Jabala; and when he came, asked why he had ill-treated a Muslim brother. "The man" said the king "had insulted me; and had it not been for the sanctity of the place, I would have killed him there and then "Your words," said Umar the Caliph "have added to the gravity of your offence; and unless you obtain the pardon of the injured man, you shall have to submit to the usual penalty of the law." "I am a king" contented Jabala, "while the other is only a common man." "King or no king" said the Caliph, "both of you are Muslims and both of you are equal in the eye of the law." Jabala then prayed that the penalty might be delayed; and on the consent of the injured man, the delay was accorded. In the night, however, Jabala escaped.

In the executive department of the state, too, the Muslim kings recognised no distinction of creed and caste. All posts of emoluments and trust were equally open to Jews, Christians and other nationalities. "Under

the Moghul emperors of Delhi, the Hindus commanded armies, administered provinces and sat in the councils of the sovereigns."

The Muslim rule in Spain for seven hundred years furnishes a brilliant and instructive example of the political character of Islam. Jews and Christians in Spain were given full exercise of their religion, free use of their places of worship and perfect security of life and property. They were even allowed to govern themselves within certain prescribed limits by their own civil law. They were given equal share in the administration of the country and equal chances to serve in the civil and military departments of the state. Syed Ameer Ali writes :—

"For seven centuries the Moslems held Spain, and the beneficence of their rule inspite of intestine quarrels and dynastic disputes, is testified to and acknowledged even by their enemies. The High culture attained by the Spanish Arabs has been sometimes considered as due principally to frequent marriages between Moslems and Christians. This circumstance undoubtedly



exercised a great influence on the development of the Spanish Moslems and the growth of that wonderful civilisation to which modern Europe owes so much of its advance in the arts of peace. What happened in Spain happened also in other places, wherever the Moslems entered a change came over the countries; order took the place of lawlessness, and peace and plenty smiled on the land. As war was not the privileged profession of one caste so labour was not the mark of degradation to another. The pursuit of agriculture was as popular with all classes as the pursuit of arms.<sup>1</sup>

I cannot close this chapter without making a brief reference to the various and important reforms introduced by the Caliph Umar, which have invariably served as the basis of administrative canons of all the civilized nations. The Caliph fixed the taxation on agricultural classes on equitable and moderate basis; canals were constructed in every part of the empire for irrigation; the feudal burdens which had crushed the peasantry, the backbone of country, were absolutely withdrawn; and they were liberat-

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1. *The Spirit of Islam* p. 260

ed from the bondage of centuries. The British Government of India who are confronted with the difficult problems of rural uplift, may well copy these reforms to the general contentment and the increased prosperity of the country. The criminal intelligence department also owes its origin to the administrative ingenuity of the great Caliph.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE WAR ETHICS OF ISLAM.

War is a necessary evil. Occasions do arise when a man is compelled to unsheathe the sword. The whole history of the human race shows that at times the use of arms becomes indispensable. Nay, it becomes one of our highest humanitarian duties. Until the millenium is reached; and until all men become true Muslims, war shall remain as an indispensable factor in human society. For instance, we cannot stand as idle spectators when sheer wrong is done to the weak and the poor; when their legitimate rights are trampled down; and when their religious liberty is at stake. The virtuous men of all nations have resorted to the sword in such circumstances. The Mosaic law is admittedly very severe in retaliation. Rama and Krishna, the two dieties of Hindu India, are famous for their heroic bloodshed in the cause of righteousness; and claim allegiance from millions of people for their this act of merit. The gentle teacher of Nazareth, the very personification of love and tenderness, also at a certain time in his life advised the disciples to purchase swords

by selling their clothes ; and openly avowed that he had come to send "fire and sword" into the world.<sup>1</sup>

The Christian church is perplexed to explain the apparent inconsistencies in the recorded teachings of the master with regard to the use of the sword and "love thine enemy." But the Great War has furnished the best commentary of facts ; during which the ministers of the Church spared no pains to justify war from the teachings of Jesus. It is indeed an irony of fate that the Christian missionaries, who invariably stigmatised Islam as the "religion of the sword," were themselves guilty of staining their hands with blood and cruelty. The Great War which was carried on for five long years with the approval of the church, must have left the clergy wiser. But to Muslims the apparent contradictions in the teachings of Jesus are no inconsistencies. They are meant to meet two different situations. A thing which is evil at one time, becomes virtue at another. Situations, as they arise, must be met with appropriate methods. Jesus would have explained his conflicting words

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1. *Luke XII : 49, and Mathew X : 34.*

in the light of events, but his ministry was cut short, and he had no time to do so. However, he predicted the advent of another Teacher who would tell "all the truth." So Muhammad came and gave humanity a perfect code of life. He fully explained the situations, in which Muslims are bound to unsheathe the sword. He made war, in certain circumstances, a great virtue saying the "paradise lies under the shadow of the sword." Even Jesus would have done so, had he been spared longer to his people. But the Church has completed the task left undone by the master in espousing the cause of the Great War, yet she was unconsciously walking in the foot-prints of Muhammad.

Like all religions, Islam does sanction the use of the sword in certain well defined circumstances which may be briefly mentioned here. Firstly, the use of the sword is permitted in the cause of religion. Here by "religion" I do not mean Islam alone; but every religion on the surface of the earth, be it Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism or any other persuasion. According to Islam every man has the birth right of professing his religious convictions. None is allowed to

stand between God and man. There should be no compulsion in matters religious.<sup>1</sup> This right must be defended, if need be, with the sword. The Quran says :—

(a) “And fight with them until there is no persecution and the religion is only for God.”<sup>2</sup>

(b) “And fight with them until there is no more persecution and all religions should be for God.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus Islam stands for perfect freedom of conscience; and the Muslims are the defenders of all religions.

Secondly, Islam sanctions the wielding of the sword for the defence of a house of worship. All places of worship, synagogues, temples, churches, mosques and cloisters are equally sacred in the eye of the Islamic Law. When a house of worship, be it a church or a temple, is in danger, a Muslim is required to shed his very blood to save it from demolition. The Quran clearly lays down :

“Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them ; Those who have been ex-

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1. *Holy Quran* II: 256.

2. II: 30 ;

3 VIII: 39.

pelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say: our Lord is Allah. And had there not been Allah's repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered, And surely Allah will help him who helps His Cause most surely Allah is strong and mighty." <sup>1</sup>

It is significant that mosques are mentioned last of all. This verse has been the guiding principle of Muslim sovereigns in defending and maintaining the Hindu shrines in India and the Christian churches in Spain. India after seven centuries of Muslim rule is still full of Hindu temples of remote antiquity. But where are, one may ask, the beautiful mosques which once formed the glory of Muslim Spain. To pick out a solitary instance, here and there, of the conversion of a shrine into a mosque is to make a mountain out of a mole hill. Such cases are too rare to deserve any serious consideration; and are due to the indiscreetness of individuals. They do not make a general rule; nor does Islam approve of them.

Thirdly, the use of the sword is permissible for self-defence; and the reason for it is obvious. Every man has the legitimate right to exist. But permission to fight in this case is restricted by the condition that as soon as the enemy suspends hostilities and inclines to peace Muslims should do the same. "But if they desist" says the Quran "then God is forgiving and merciful."<sup>1</sup> "And if they incline to peace, do you incline to it, and trust in God; He is the hearing and knowing. And if they intend to deceive you, then surely God is sufficient for you."<sup>2</sup> This clearly shows that if the enemy offers peace, it is to be accepted in all circumstances, though the enemy's intentions may be to deceive. All the civilized nations of the world act on this principle of the Quran. In the Great European War, Great Britain followed the teachings of Islam. The Sermon on the Mount was absolutely neglected.

It will not be out of place here to survey briefly the Prophet's military campaign, which began after his *Hijrat* to Medina. The circumstances which led him to wield the sword clearly illustrate the war ethics



enunciated by the Quran. The Prophet had to fight seven battles in all, out of which, three are very important, the rest being more of the nature of skirmishes in a general state of war. Before describing these battles, however, I must invite the reader's attention to the Prophet's previous life at Mecca. For full thirteen years the Prophet and his companions were subjected to the most inhuman persecutions at Mecca; and in fact some companions had to flee to Abyssinia for their lives—a fact which is admitted by friend and foe. The enemy, then, planned to do away with the Prophet himself and, the very night his life was to be attempted he had to fly in the company of his devoted friend Abu-Bakr to Medina, where he was accorded a warm reception. But the Meccans would not let him live peacefully even in his refuge. Being jealous of his success at Medina the Quraish of Mecca made repeated attacks on the "Prophet's Town" as it was then called, in order to nip the tender plant of Islam in the bud. It was, in these circumstances, that the Prophet was compelled to take up the sword only in self-defence. The hostile

critics of Islam often ascribe this change of the Prophet's attitude to his success at Medina. But the locality of each battle which the Prophet had to fight is a decisive factor to determine the motives. Had the Prophet been keen to take advantage of his success at Medina, he would have been aggressive, and would have attacked Mecca to count old scores. But the case is quite the reverse. It is the enemy who attacks Medina, as the localities of the battles show. The first battle was fought at Badr, 120 miles from Mecca and only 30 miles from Medina; the comparative strength of the belligerent parties being 313 Muslims and 1000 Meccans.

The scene of the second battle was Uhud, a place only 12 miles from Medina; and the relative strength of the contending parties, this time, was 1000 Muslims and 3000 Meccans. The third was an attack on Medina itself. The town was besieged by a formidable army of 10,000 soldiers; and the Prophet had to defend the city by digging a ditch round it. Do not these facts and figures—the locality of action and the relative strength of fighting parties,—conclu-

sively prove the fact that the Prophet always took the defensive ?

The treatment meted out to the war prisoners by Muslims still furnishes a lesson for most civilized nations of the world. Abu Aziz, a war prisoner of Badr, states, that in his captivity he was given the best food, while the remaining members of the household subsisted on dates. On another occasion six hundred prisoners of war, including Jawarya fell into the hands of the Muslims. Jawarya was a daughter of a chieftain, Haris, who came to the Prophet in order to ransom his daughter. The matter was left to Jawarya's own choice who preferred to stay with the Prophet. This speaks eloquently of the kind treatment she received as a war prisoner. The Prophet paid the ransom from his own pocket and took Jawarya, at her own request in marriage. All the remaining 600 were released.

The magnanimity of the soul, which the Holy Prophet evinced, after the fall of Mecca is the most brilliant example of "love thine enemy." At the head of 10,000 men the Prophet marched against Mecca, *the* same Mecca where for 13 long years the Holy

Prophet and his companions were subjected to ruthless persecution. The city surrendered and was occupied without a drop of blood being spilt. The vanquished foe who had spared no ingenuity to inflict tortures on Muslims in the past, was now at the feet of Muhammad. The Meccans deserved the severest punishment for their heinous crimes according to the canons of the most civilized society. But Muhammad was too kind. He was the "Blessing for Humanity" in the true sense of the word. He wanted to set a practical example of "love thine enemy." He pronounced his judgment—a judgment which was beyond the wildest expectations of the Meccans for leniency and proclaimed: "This day there shall be no reproach on you." This magnanimous amnesty, which stands unique in the history of the world, won over the hearts of the people. It anointed the wounds of hatred and animosity. It ushered in a new era of peace and love.

Thus Muhammad had to fight; and Islam does sanction the use of the sword. But it sanctions this only in self-defence, or for establishing the freedom of conscience.

The accusation that Islam was spread at the point of the sword is without any foundation. Not a single conversion was gained through force; nor a single battle was fought for the spread of the new religion. On the other hand, Muslims were tortured ruthlessly for adopting Islam; and they bore all hardships and trials with wonderful fortitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad has also enunciated a system of war, which in the words of his immediate successor, Abu Bakr is as follows :—

“When you meet your enemies in the fight, comfort yourself as befits good Muslims, and remember to prove yourselves the true descendants of Ishmael. In the order and disposition of the host, and in all battles, be careful to follow your banners boldly, and be ever obedient to your leaders. Never yield to, or turn your backs on your enemies; it is for the cause of God that you fight. You are incited by no less noble a desire than His Glory; therefore, fear not to enter into the fight; nor let the numbers of your foes alarm you even though excessive. If God should give you the victory, do not abuse, your advantages, and beware

how you stain your swords in the blood of him who yields; neither touch ye the children, the women nor the infirm old men whom ye may find among your enemies. In your progress through the enemy's land cut down no palms, or other fruit trees; burn no dwellings from the stores of your enemies, take only what you need for your wants. Let no destruction be made without necessity, but occupy the city of the enemy; and if there be any that may serve as an asylum to your adversaries, then do you destroy. Treat the prisoners and him who renders himself to your mercy with pity, as God shall do to you in your need; but trample down the proud and rebellious nor fail to crush all who have broken the conditions imposed on them. Let there be no perfidy nor falsehood in your treaties with your enemies: be faithful in all things proving yourself ever upright and noble, and maintaining your word and promise truly. Do not disturb the quiet of the monk or hermit and destroy not their abodes but inflict the rigour of death upon all who shall refuse the conditions you may impose upon them."<sup>1</sup>

I leave it to the judgment of the reader to determine how far these precepts are needed to be followed in practice by the most civilized nations of the day in their warfare and peace treaties.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE STATUS OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.

The word woman sums up a history of long subordination and dependence. "Day and night must women be held by their protector in a state of dependence," says Manu, the great law-giver of ancient India. The frightful institution of *sati*, which was commonly practised in India before the establishment of British rule, and which required a widow to throw herself into the burning flames of her deceased husband's pile, was a relic of the old idea that woman had no separate entity and must perish with her husband. In Arabia, too, before the advent of Islam, the birth of a daughter was a sign of humiliation; and the newly born baby was buried alive in the burning sand of the desert to die under the scorching heat of the tropical sun. Woman had no social status in pre-Islamic days. She had no rights of property, nay, she herself was a part of the inheritance, and was taken possession of along with other property. No religion of the world except Islam has ever taken care to raise woman from this degraded position. In the Mosaic law divorce



was the privilege of the husband only,<sup>1</sup> the vow of a woman might be disallowed by her father or husband.<sup>2</sup> In Roman law too a woman was completely dependent. If married, she and her property passed into the power of her husband, if unmarried she was under the perpetual tutelage of her father during his life. The wife was the purchased property of her husband and like a slave acquired only for his benefit. A woman could not continue a family, could not be a witness, surety, tutor or curator. She could not adopt or be adopted, or make a will or a contract.<sup>3</sup> In Christianity, the fall of Adam and the "original sin" are ascribed to the woman. "Adam was not deceived but the woman being deceived was in the transgression," is the verdict of the church. St. Paul has clearly enunciated that "of woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die." These words coming from such an authority, were echoed and re-echoed throughout the Christian world from time to time and woman was held in perpetual disgrace. The Book of

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1. Dent XXIV : 1

2. Numb XXX : 3

3. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th edition.

Genesis seems to be chiefly responsible for this treatment of woman. Tertullian, referring to the fall of Adam, characterises woman in the following terms :

“Do you not know that you are each an Eve ; the sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age ; the guilt must of necessity live too, you are the devil’s gateway, you are the unsealer of that tree, you are the first deserter of the Divine Law. You destroyed so easily God’s image-man. <sup>1</sup>

That is, why the saints of the Christian church have indulged in the pious practice of looking down upon woman as “the organ of the devil,” the “foundation of the arms of the devil,” a scorpion ever ready to sting,” “the gate of the devil,” and “the road of inequity,” “the poison of the asp,” “the malice of dragon,” “the instrument which the devil uses to gain possession of our soul.” It is true that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is held in great esteem by the church, and is believed to be the recipient of Divine favours ; but perhaps she is the only person to enjoy this

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1. *Woman in Islam* p. 11

privilege. However, the church has not yet been able to explain categorically how Jesus and his mother are absolved of the "original sins," which, according to Christianity, is the common heritage of the human race.

Such was the degraded position of woman when Islam came to rescue her. The Quran has not only cleared woman of the old stigmas but has actually exalted her status. According to the Holy Book of Islam, a woman is a bulwark against Satan. She is a light house of virtue, and can save man from the shipwreck of stormy passions. A married couple in the terms of the Quran "is fortified" so to speak, against all evil propensities. Islam does not associate the fall of Adam to Eve alone. Referring to the event, the Holy Quran says :

"And we said : O Adam ! dwell  
 you and your wife in the garden and  
 eat from it a plenteous (food) wher-  
 ever you wish, but do not approach  
 this tree, for then you will be of the  
 unjust.

"But the devil made them both fall  
 from it and caused them to depart

from that state in which they were." <sup>1</sup>

Thus they "both" fall a victim to the devil not only the woman. This passage of the Quran also points and to a truism in our daily life. In every house, every married couple is Adam and Eve; and they are required to live peacefully in the full enjoyment of life, which makes this world a paradise for them; if they live in harmony, and love each other. But no sooner do they taste the apple of discord, than they are banished from that happy state. The chief point, however, for which I have quoted the above passage is the equality of man and woman. Woman is brought on the same footing as man by the Quran as it clearly says that "the devil made *them both* fall from it." Again, we are told in the Quran that men and women are created from the one and the same kind, thus placing their creation on the same footing. It is not only these two occasions that the equality of man and woman is urged, but in several other places too the Quran has declared that women are as capable of moral, spiritual and intellectual advancement as men :

"I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other." <sup>1</sup>

"And whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and he is believer, these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be dealt with a job unjustly." <sup>2</sup>

"Whoever does good, whether male or female, and he is a believer, We will certainly make him live a happy life, and We will certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did." <sup>3</sup>

"And whoever does good, whether male or female, and he is a believer, that shall enter the garden, in which they shall be given sustenance without measure." <sup>4</sup>

Thus the Quran makes no difference between man and woman, so far their spiritual and moral progress is concerned. Both are equally rewarded by God, and are equally eligible to His favours. The mother of Moses, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are

spoken of in the Quran as recipients of the Divine revelation, which shows that women can reach the highest stage of spiritual progress. On the material side as well, we find no difference, except what nature makes for its own ends. A woman, according to Islam, can earn, and own property, and dispose of it, just as a man can. The Quran explicitly says on these points:

“Men shall have the benefit of what they earn, and women shall have the benefit of what they earn.” <sup>1</sup>

“Men shall have a portion of what the parents and the near relative leave. And women shall have a portion of what the parents and the near relative leave.” <sup>2</sup>

“But if they (*i. e.*, women) of themselves be pleased to give up to you a portion of it, then eat it with enjoyment and with wholesome result.” <sup>3</sup>

As I have already pointed out woman in Arabia was taken as a part of property. The widow, on the death of her husband, passed into the hands of his heir as a part of inherit-

ance and became the wife of the deceased's eldest son ; exception however being made only in the case of a natural mother. The Quran put an end to this brutal system of sexual relation and said :

“And marry not women whom your fathers married, except that has already passed ; this surely is indecent and hateful, and it is an evil way.”<sup>1</sup>

Islam positively commands kind treatment of women. “Treat them kindly,” says the Holy Quran. In the words of the Holy Book they are “garments for men” ; while men are “garments for them.” What a beautiful and appropriate metaphor ! Garments hide one's nakedness and physical defects. They also protect one from heat and cold. And so does a wife or a husband secure the chastity and security of each other. Again ; our clothes are the means of elegance, beauty ; and a compliment to our body, and so are the wife and the husband to each other.

A married couple, according to Islam, must live in love and harmony ; and make

their home a paradise of their own. Affection, tenderness and benevolence should regulate their dealings and feelings; and the whole atmosphere of the house should be saturated with happiness. The Quran says : " And We said : O Adam ! dwell you and your wife in the garden " (*i. e.* in a happy, blissful state). <sup>1</sup> " And one of His signs is that He created mates from yourselves that you may find quiet of mind in them and He put between you love and compassion, most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect." <sup>2</sup> Marriage, according to Islam, should be based upon mutual love. The Holy Quran elsewhere clearly says that you must "marry such women as *seem good to you.*" <sup>3</sup> The Prophet is reported to have said that for marriage the consent of a virgin girl or a widow, as the case may be, is essential. In Islam there is no marriage except by the mutual consent of the couple. The present system of marriage, practised in India, in which the parties concerned have practically no voice, is absolutely un-Islamic. It is one of the much needed social reforms in our country and

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1. II : 35

2. XXX : 21

3. IV : 3



both Hindus and Muslims should adopt it for their own common good. No society can make any progress in the world unless its social relations are based upon solid, healthy footing.

It is not only wives, however, that have received such a consideration in Islam. Other female relations have also got their due share. Respect to the mother is one of the cardinal teachings of the Quran. "Paradise lies under the feet of your mothers" says the Prophet. The acquisition of knowledge has been made compulsory both for boys and girls. The birth of a daughter carries no stigma in Islam, rather those who feel sorry at the birth of a girl are condemned in the Quran. The Prophet Muhammad was the greatest benefactor of the fair sex. He had a great regard for women, as the following few sayings of his would show :—

"Amongst my followers the best of men are they, who are best and kindest to their women."

"Woman is sovereign in the house of her husband."

"The world is full of objects of joy and

delight and the best source of delight is a pious and chaste woman."

### POLYGAMY.

It is, however, said that Islam has done a great wrong to the fair sex by sanctioning polygamy. Nothing can be farther from truth than this assertion. Islam has, no doubt, sanctioned polygamy as an exception to the general rule of monogamy, to safeguard the interest of women, and not to disgrace them. Polygamy in certain cases is surely a blessing for the gentle sex. The plurality of wives is often questioned on sentimental grounds. But the world is getting wiser; and foolish sentimentality is bound to give way before reason. It will be admitted on all hands that men are bread winners. They are meant for hard, out-door duties, while women are the queens of homes. Men by their very physical nature are born for strife and struggle. They are hard stuff. They are more exposed to death and danger. In their out door avocations of life they have to face the most trying circumstances of weather and climate. They have to go to battlefields and face the bullets of the

enemy. Therefore, their death rate must be higher than that of the female population, and consequently there must be a huge disparity between the number of men and women. After the Great War, there was a large number of surplus women in England, who could not possibly find husbands in their own country. The problem assumed the form of menace in 1921, when I was staying in England; and the Government was asked to suggest a solution. Mr. Lloyd George, the then Premier, was much worried over the question. After a great deal of serious consideration, he proposed the scheme of emigration and advised the young girls to go abroad in the search of matches. The Government granted free passage to such enterprisers, and a few "sweat heart boats" sailed off the coast of England with waving hands and weeping eyes. But the ingenuous scheme of Mr. Lloyd George was doomed to failure. It was a mere dodge of the Premier. All young girls of England who stood in dire need of husbands, could not possibly leave their dear home, deserting their loving parents and kind friends. So the situation remained as it was, and the emigration

scheme achieved little success. Is not the institution of polygamy a blessing for the fair sex in these circumstances? Does it not provide protection and sweet homes for the gentle sex, who are otherwise destined to live a life of misery and helplessness? In England many English women, who had long prejudices against polygamy, are driven to become second wives; and marry Asiatic young men who were already married in their homes. Marriage in such cases is not officially registered. It is only a private contract. Such marriages are frequently solemnised in England. I know a few friends of mine got married in this way.

The public opinion is gradually becoming in favour of polygamy in the British Isles. Here I must tell a story based upon my own experience. In 1920-2, I was staying in England. Towards the close of 1921, a representative of a London newspaper came to see me. The conversation turned to the future of Islam in England. "Do you hope," said he, "that Islam will spread in this country." "Yes, decidedly" said I. "It is all very well," rejoined he, "to expect

that Muslim missionaries will be able to convert people intellectually but what about the social customs? For instance, Englishmen will never approve of polygamy. It is against the law of this country." "We will change the law" said I, "by changing the public opinion. Sentiments must subside before reason. Monogamy is simply based upon sentiments. England has just emerged out of a great war, which has largely reduced her male-population. Should the surplus women remain without husbands? If so, it will reduce the population of the country; and England will not get soldiers for the next war." "Well why should not a woman have more than one husband?" "No!" said I, "nature has placed limitations upon woman." The representative, being convinced, kept silence and left after the usual etiquette of thanks. The next day he sent me his paper in which the interview had appeared. It was lying on my table when a lady came to see me. She read the paper and said to me: "You had a very interesting interview with this man." I said: "Do you agree to what I have said there?" "Yes," said she, "why not? It is very reasonable,

I should not mind if my husband takes another wife." The lady afterwards embraced Islam with her husband and two daughters.

In England, the plurality of wives is illegal, but the law does not interfere with illicit connection between the two sexes; and many English homes are ruined through this laxity of the law. So, practically, polygamy *exists* in England; and the English law tolerates it. During my sojourn in England, an English peer came to see me, and in the interview related to me the whole story of his troubles with his wife, who was unfortunately suffering from a disease. He eventually requested me to solemnize his second marriage according to the Islamic rites; assuring me that it would be entirely within the limits of the English law. But for some private reasons I declined. In France, polygamy is legally recognised; with the only modification that the second wife is called the maid and not the wife, and has not got the same status. But it makes no difference, with the exception that it degrades womanhood. In Germany after the great War, the problem of surplus women was receiving the consideration of the Govern-

ment, who were contemplating to make some changes in the law governing sex relations on the lines of polygamy. In short, the whole of Christendom is labouring under disabilities of monogamy and trying its best to get rid of it. And sooner the change comes the better. It will do a tremendous good to the cause of women who are suffering under immorality and misery. The Christian church has no scriptural authority to impose monogamy on its people. "While polygamy was the rule in the Biblical days among the ancient Jews," says the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "and was permitted and even enjoined in certain cases by the Mosaic Law, the Christian church, though it is nowhere forbidden except for bishops in the new Testament, has always set its face against it. There have, however, been divines who dissented from this general disapproval." In Hinduism too one can have as many wives as he pleases; the high caste sometimes having as many as hundred.

So far, we have noticed only one major reason for polygamy; that is, the preponderance of the numerical strength of women that of men. But let us take into con-

sideration some minor reasons as well. Take, for instance, the case of a married woman, who unfortunately becomes incapacitated through ailment to perform the duties of a wife; or is incapable of producing a child. Now, what should the husband do? Should he remain doomed to perpetual unhappiness; or should he have a second wife and beget children to make the home sweet and dear? The first wife, to whom nature has been somewhat unkind, can find greater happiness in finding the husband happier and surrounded by children, who are in a way her own children as well. In her old age, they are expected to look after their step-mother along with the real mother. But if the husband does not take a second wife, the couple is destined to die childless, and if the husband dies before the wife, which is quite probable, the poor widow will be left forlorn. Is not polygamy, in such cases, a blessing for women? Again, take the case of young girl, whose blood has got the germs of tuberculosis, which are sure to develop as she gets married and brings forth children. Her case is pitiable. She is not in a position to get a husband in normal conditions; and if she



does, her very life is in danger. You will suggest that she should not marry at all. But celibacy is an unnatural state of life. It can bring her no happiness and no honour. The only course, left to her happiness, is that she should be taken as a second wife by one who, having full regard for her physical condition, regulates her life in a way that may be conducive to her health and strength. He may even exercise birth control if necessary. Protection to women is one of the chief aims of marriage, and in certain cases this protection can only be given by resorting to the plurality of wives. No ulterior motives, no foolish sentimentalities, and no hysterical whims should be allowed to stand before the higher and nobler aspirations of union between the two sexes.

Lastly, take the case of a married couple who have no affinity between them; and are repulsive to each other. Can such a marriage be happy? Can it fulfil the purpose of the sacred bond? In this case, there can be only two alternatives: divorce or polygamy. But divorce stigmatises a woman. Moreover, she is handicapped by nature. She loses her charm with the first marriage.

She cannot readily get a second husband. Sometimes she is bound by the ties of love for her children. Therefore, it is in her interest that she may remain in the same house; and the husband may have a second wife of his own choice. He is, of course, expected to do justice between the two wives. The husband, being satisfied and happy with the second wife, will naturally be considerate to the first one. His peevishness will subside; and he will be a better man than before. In this case, too, plurality of wives is in the interest of woman. I have not quoted mere hypothetical cases. But they are all based upon actual experience of life. Taking all these facts into consideration, the Quran has sanctioned polygamy for the good of the women-folk. But the Holy Book has sanctioned it as an exception to the general rule, and has laid down justice and equity between wives as a necessary condition for it :

“And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such women as seem good to you two and three and four, but if you fear that you will not do justice

(between them) then marry only one or what your right hands possess.”<sup>1</sup>

The opening words of this verse clearly show that the chief aim of polygamy is to give protection to the gentle sex. The Holy Prophet's several marriages are the best illustration of this principle. There is only one objection against polygamy and that is entirely based upon sentimentality. It is often alleged that by the plurality of wives love is divided and a husband cannot equally love two wives. This is no argument. I have seen marriages, in which there is no love lost between the couple. Is polygamy permissible in this case? Again, I am at a loss to understand why a husband cannot act equitably between two wives; if a mother can do so among her several children. As for love, even parents do not love their children *equally*. A mother's affection is the most natural and permanent form of love; and even her feelings are not equally distributed among her children. She humours A more than B. You will say that this is owing to the difference in manners, and habits of the children. Quite right; but the same plea can be

advanced perhaps with greater force in the case of wives. If you cannot compel a mother to love her children equally, how can you expect a husband to love his wives equally? But apart from love he can treat them with justice and equity; and the Quran, being the Word of God, who is the Creator of human nature, makes just the same demand from us. The Book expressly says that you would not be able to keep equality of love between wives but you should not be disinclined from one altogether, keeping her in a state of suspense.<sup>1</sup> And this is exactly what a man can possibly do. In short, the advocates of equal love have no case. They are expected to go a step further to be consistent in their theory and promulgate the doctrine of a single issue to keep the pendulum of love in balance between the parents and the offspring.

### DIVORCE.

Divorce, like polygamy, has also received much hostile criticism from the Western writers. But such critics do not pause to think that it is only a remedial measure in certain exigencies of life; and not a general

rule. Islam does not encourage divorce. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said that it is the "most detestable of all lawful things." The Quran sanctions divorce only in cases when all attempts to bring about conciliation between husband and wife fail. And this view is accepted now even by the dignatories of the Christian church in the light of experience. Occasions do arise when separation of a married couple becomes indispensable. The following extract from the *Sunday Times* of London (9th February, 1930) reveals the mentality of the church and establishes the wisdom of the Islamic law of divorce:

"There are few subjects that have given rise to more acute controversy than the attitude of the Christian church to marriage and divorce. Even amongst ecclesiastics there are wide differences of opinion. There is one school of thought, which includes the Archbishop of Canterbury, that holds divorce to be contrary to the teachings of Christ, and another that contends that it is absurd to adhere to the rule that marriage in every conceivable circumstance is indissoluble. The Bishop of St. Edmundsbury, who belongs to the latter

class, has made an important pronouncement on the subject. He holds that there is nothing in divorce for adultery, which is irreconcilable with Christian teaching. He holds, and indeed, it is generally held that the innocent party has the right to re-marriage in a church. To hold otherwise would be to apply the same punishment to guilt and innocence."

"But Dr. Whittingham is prepared to go a step further, and in certain cases remove the ban against the guilty party. In making such a courageous declaration he runs contrary to the teachings of many of his episcopal brethren, but he puts forward a strong case and one which will make a wide appeal to those who put the gospel of love before the Mosaic "lex talionis " The average man is not so much concerned with the subtleties of the Schoolmen as with the ordinary affairs of life, and wherever and whenever a guilty person repents of sin, surely the whole burden of Christian teaching is that forgiveness is available. Forgiveness and continuous punishment are incompatible, and the Bishop of St. Edmundsbury is on strong ground when he is prepared to admit the re-marriage of

divorced persons provided there be 'evidence of repentance and some kind of guarantee given by the behaviour of the man and woman' as to future conduct. The sacred bonds of matrimony must, for moral and civil reasons, be kept as strong as possible, but it is important that in maintaining this attitude we do nothing which would create an injustice or lead to greater evils than those we desire to suppress."

#### PURDA OR SECLUSION.

Another misconception, widely prevailing, in the world is that Islam enjoins the seclusion of women; and has thus incapacitated one half of the human population. This is absolutely wrong. Seclusion or Purda is not an Islamic institution. It is only a custom with the high class Indians, and has nothing to do with Islam. The Quran sanctions that women should go about and earn their living.<sup>1</sup> In the days of the Holy Prophet women attended mosques and nursed the wounded and the sick in the battle-fields. They are, of course, expected not to make a display of their coquetry and fashion in public.<sup>2</sup> They should move about for

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1. IV : 23

2. *Holy Quran* XXIV : 31

shopping or other vocations of life in a simple dress, covering "their heads, bosoms and ornaments," but keeping their face and hands bare. The *niqab* or the veil, which is commonly in vogue in Muslim society, has no Islamic authority. It is only a convention. Islam has, however, laid great stress on sex morality; but it has never introduced seclusion for that end. It only enjoins that men and women should have their "looks cast down"<sup>1</sup> and should cultivate a very high standard of moral character.

1. Holy Quran XXIV : 30-31



## CHAPTER IX.

### ISLAM AND SLAVERY.

Slavery was perhaps the greatest curse, against which humanity cried aloud for redemption, before the advent of Islam. For thousands of years this ignoble institution continued reducing the mankind to a most despicable plight, but no civilization, no religion, no legislation thought it worth while to condemn it. On the other hand, it was upheld by almost all of them. The Hindu religion has openly recognised it; and the Shudras are the slave class of ancient India. The old philosophers of Greece and Rome were all in favour of slavery. Aristotle held it to be necessary and natural, and under certain conditions, beneficial to society. After him Epicureans, the Stoics and other schools of thought in Greece held the same opinion. The very system of the Roman life depended upon slavery. The great prophet, Moses, was reasonably expected to do something towards the abolition of this base institution, as one part of his mission was to liberate his people from the tyrant of Egypt. But after the "chosen people" were set free, the Mosaic law meted

out the same measure of slavery to others and the institution remained as it was.

In the time of Jesus, too, slavery existed in its worst type. The ratio of the free population to slaves in Italy between 146 BC and AD 235 was 1 to 3, their respective numbers being 6,944,000, and 20,832,000. A freed man of the time of Augustus left as many as 4,116 slaves by his will. The slave trade was carried on extensively every where. Under the Roman Empire the master had absolute authority over his slaves; and could even put them to death. "Employment in the mill, relegation to the mines or quarries, men and women in chains, working half naked under the lash, guarded by soldiers, slaves brought to obedience by means of systematic terrorism, gladiatorial combats, fight with wild beasts in the amphitheatres, internment in sub-terranean cells, or exposure to the inclemency of the weather, while fixed in dirty fish ponds, slave maids shockingly subjected to the brutality of their masters, contributing to the impurities of that period and disgracing society,—all these were common occurrences in Roman life." <sup>1</sup> Seneca,

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1. *The Ideal Prophet* p. 246-247.

just before the coming of Jesus, raised his voice against these horrors; but his cry proved a cry in the wilderness. The so called "God Incarnate" in the person of Jesus came to redeem the "whole of humanity." He was declared to be the "saviour of mankind." But the least that could be said of his mission, he himself summed up in these words—"Come unto me, all ye the labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And who other than a slave could be imagined more deserving of "rest". Who other than a bondsman could be rightly considered as "heavy laden." But did Jesus put these words into practice? Did he liberate slaves?

The condition of slaves was at its worst when Jesus is reported to have uttered these words; yet we find nothing in his sayings enjoining kind treatment towards slaves; not to speak of their emancipation. He did not concern himself with them. It is surprising to find Christians blaming the Holy Prophet for not abolishing slavery. Professor Margoliouth goes so far as to say that the idea of the "abolition of slavery did not occur to Muhammad." <sup>1</sup> It would have been more

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1. *The Ideal Prophet* p. 247.

appropriate for the Professor and those of his way of thinking, to say the same about their own "god"; who never raised his voice against the cruel treatment of slaves. Christianity as a system or creed raised no protest against slavery. The teachings of Jesus, as portrayed in Christian traditions contained nothing disapproving bondage. The church itself had slaves and recognized, in explicit terms, the lawfulness of this baneful institution. This serious omission on the part of Jesus made Christianity quite indifferent to the tortures and degradation of the slave population. Reform, however, had begun before Christianity became a dominant religion in the Roman Empire. Hadrian who came to the throne in A.D. 117 made a start by curtailing the source of slavery and forbidding the kidnapping and sale of children under penalty of death. He also made other important reforms in slavery. Constantine came and renewed some of the old practices, abolished by Hadrian and others. Slavery again began to flourish and continued in Christendom for centuries. Germany, France and Spain all participated in the

slave trade. The trade in England remained for a long time exclusively in the hands of companies. Between 1680 and 1700, 300,000 negroes were exported by the British African Company and other private adventures. Between 1700 and the end of 1786, 610,000, were brought to Jamaica alone, the annual average to all the British Colonies being 20,095. The total number of slave ships sailing from these ports was 192, and in them space was provided for the transport of 47, 146 negroes. In 1791 the number of European factories on the coast of Africa was 40, of these 14 were English, 3 French 15 Dutch, 4 Portuguese; and 4 Danish. More than half the slave trade was in British hands. The slave traffic continued in various Christian countries up to 1850. The statistics quoted above are taken from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

In short, Christianity did nothing to abolish or mitigate the cruelties of slavery. The Christian writers have frankly admitted it. "Although slavery has existed," says Rev. Mr. Hughes, "side by side by Christianity, it is undoubtedly contrary to the spirit of the teachings of our Divine Lord, who has

given to the world the grand doctrine of the "universal Brotherhood." I wish Jesus had done so; and in the terms clear enough for his followers to act upon. But a Prophet wholly and solely interested in the "lost sheep" of Israelites could not be expected to think of matters of universal concern. Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the first man in the history of the world who felt pity for slaves. He stood as a champion of this wretched class and took effective measures to abolish slavery. Muhammad was not an idle dreamer. He was a man of action. He knew how to work rightly in the world. He would not confine himself to orations and homilies; he would survey the whole situation; he would appreciate all the obstacles in his way, he would then adopt means efficacious to bring out the best results. Slavery was the most popular institution upheld by usage; and civilization every where. It supplied a most valuable form of property. It was interwoven with the various aspects of the then social life, and its sudden abolition would have struck the very foundation of the social structure. Besides, the institution was in some respects not without re-

deeming features and could not be dispensed with totally. Among its various sources war was perhaps the most prominent. War, as yet has not left the human race, and the only conceivable check to it would be to award some deterrent punishment to the aggressor, when defeated. In old days the males of the fallen foe were killed, later on they were taken as slaves; and this was not a bad substitution for slaughter. Indemnity or captivity came to be regarded as the natural demand of a conqueror from the vanquished. But the inhuman treatment meted out to captives every where in the pre-Islamic world made war-bondage identical with slavery. War prisonership was indispensable but something was needed to better the condition of the captives in order to save them the indignity which the word "slave" carries with it. The institution of war-bondage was an essential appendage to humanity; but some steps must be taken to raise the status of the bondsmen in the eye of the captor. Lord Headley in his paper on "Islam and Slavery," observes :—

"In the early days of his ministry Muhammad could not command wealth to purchase

the freedom of the slaves. He, however, preached the religion of liberating slaves and made their emancipation a virtue of great merit. We read in the Quran :—

‘It is not righteousness that you turn faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this that one should believe in Allah; and the last day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the way farer and the beggars and for *the emancipation of captives*.<sup>1</sup>

‘And what will make you comprehend what the up hill road is. It is the *setting free of slaves*, or the giving of food in the day of hunger to an orphan’<sup>2</sup> Again, the Quran lays down that a part of Zakat funds should be spent in purchasing the freedom of the slaves: ‘Alms are only for the poor and the needy and the officials appointed on them, and those whose hearts are made to incline to truth, and emancipation of captives and those in debt and in the way of Allah and the way farer’.”<sup>3</sup>

No other revealed book says any thing on

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1. II : 177.

2. XC : 11-16

3. IX : 60



the subject, and no other Prophet including Jesus inspired his followers to emancipate the slaves; or to mitigate their sufferings.

"The Prophet," however, says Syed Ameer Ali, "exorted his followers repeatedly in the name of God to enfranchise slaves, than which there was not an act more acceptable to God! He ruled that for certain sins of omission the penalty should be the manumission of slaves. He ordered that slaves should be allowed to purchase their liberty by the wages of their services; and that in case the unfortunate beings had no present means of gain, and wanted to earn in some other employment enough for that purpose, they should be allowed to leave their master on an agreement to the effect . . . . In certain contingencies, it was provided that the slaves should become enfranchised without the interference; and even against the will of their master. The contract or agreement in which the least doubt was discovered was construed most favourably in the interest of slave: and the slightest promise on the part of the master was made obligatory for the purpose of enfranchisement. He placed the duty of

kindness towards the slave on the same footing with the claims of 'kindred and neighbours, and fellow travellers and way farers,' encouraged manumission to the freest extent, and therewith the gift of a 'portion of that wealth which God has given you,' and prohibited sensual uses of a master's power over a slave with the promise of divine mercy to the wronged. To free a slave is the expiation for ignorantly slaying a believer and for certain forms of untruth. The whole tenor of Muhammad's teachings made 'permanent chattelhood' or caste impossible, and it is simply abuse of words to apply the word "slavery" in the English sense to any status known to the legislation of Islam." <sup>1</sup> The Quran abolished all kinds of slavery with the single exception of the bondage that resulted from fighting, provided it was in self-defence. Thus a Muslim is prohibited from making others his slaves; he may make prisoners of war, but only in a self-defensive fight. In order to make distinction between the two, a slave and a war-captive, the Quran does not style the latter *Abad*, the Arabic

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1. *The Spirit of Islam* p. 221-222.

equivalent for slave. "Those whom your right hand possesses" is the term used by the Quran to designate that class. It not only defines the exclusive mode in which a man could be brought under a Muslim's bondage, but it shows also that a Muslim's bondsman is not a slave, but a fallen foe, otherwise his equal; and that he should either be ransomed or set free out of favour; and the latter course was adopted by the Holy Prophet in most cases. When the Holy Prophet or the Quran used the word "*abd*" (slave) for bondsman it should be remembered that reference in such case is only to such as were already under the bondage under the old custom. The immediate liberation of such slaves was likely to cause many and far-reaching complications. The slave class possessed no wealth they had no property or means of subsistence. Their immediate emancipation would have produced a class of penniless vagabonds and indolent beggars, as their life-long abject dependence had killed all initiative in them. The task of Islam was not only to secure the freedom of slaves but also to make them useful members of society. And the

Holy Prophet did exactly the same. The difficulty of the task can be judged from what happened in England and other European countries to abolish the slave trade. In England, thrice a Bill was introduced into the Parliament and thrice it was rejected. England had to pay three hundred thousand pounds to the Portuguese for giving up the trade in north of the Equator. She paid Spain an indemnity of four hundred thousand pounds to bring the Spanish trade to an end, and an enormous sum went to pay off companies and private adventurers including the church. The Prophet had no wealth to purchase the freedom of slaves yet he possessed an inexhaustible treasure of the soul and mind. The most deep rooted evils were swept off before his mighty command as a straw before a strong gale. Besides the Quranic injunctions, with regard to the freedom of slaves, a portion of the public money was set aside for this purpose. The Prophet personally took keen interest in emancipating the slaves. "In the Meccan life," says Lord Headley, the Prophet had chance of making many slaves. His own

slaves he released and his friend and follower Abu Bakr freed a large number of his slaves and purchased a number to set them free. When the Prophet came to Medina and the conditions of warfare began, the following verse was revealed which totally abolished slavery of the old type, and made war-captivity the only kind of slavery—if it may be called such—permissible in Islam:—"It is not fit for a Prophet that he should take captives unless he has fought and triumphed."<sup>1</sup> The verse lays down a condition under which a person forfeits his liberty at the hand of another. In other words the verse abolished slavery and allowed Muslims to make war-prisoners, and this only so long as the war lasted as the following shows:—"So when you meet in a battle those who disbelieve, then smite their necks, until when you have overcome them then make them prisoners, and then either set them free as a favour or let them ransom (themselves) until the war terminates."<sup>2</sup>

It must, however, be borne in mind that the Holy Prophet was ever on the defensive

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1. VIII: 67

2. XLVII: 4.

in all his battles. He was forced to arms to protect his life which was sought with ruthless pertinacity by his enemies. The verses quoted above are very clear and need no explanation. It is apparent that Muslims are not allowed to take men or women in slavery. The Quran and Islam are entirely against this ignoble institution.

As in theory so in practice the Prophet was a great champion of slaves or war-prisoners. Most of the war-prisoners at Badr were released on ransom, while others purchased their freedom by teaching the Muslims how to read and write. When after a succession of battles, the Prophet entered Mecca as an undisputed victor, his very first act was of an enfranchiser, as he gave free pardon to all enemies, who were then under his feet. His entry into Mecca and the magnificent example set by him in pardoning his bitter enemies stands out like a beacon not only for Arabia but for the whole of the world and for all times. In Islam slaves attained to the highest position. Kutub-ud-Din, the founder of the Slave Dynasty in India, was a war-prisoner, and as such a slave. But he won the favours

of his master and became his successor. He himself had a war-prisoner, Shamsh-ud-Din, Atlamash, to whom his master gave his daughter in marriage. Not less than eight kings, who belonged to the slave Dynasty ruled in India. Subuktagin, the father of Mahmud of Ghazni, the famous invader of India, was again a slave, captured in war by Aliptagin, the first King of the Ghazni Dynasty, but became his successor. There were slaves who led the Muslim armies which consisted of the cream of Islamic society. In modern times, the Amir Abdur Rahman; the grandfather of the Ex Amir of Afghanistan, made his slave the Commander-in-Chief of his forces. Another of his slaves filled the important post of High Treasurer, while two others of his slaves were given the highest positions in the Government. The European scholars who have studied Islam with an unbiased mind have come to the conclusion that Islam does condemn slavery and aims at its abolition and the only legal cause of bringing others into bondage is prisonership of war. I should like to quote here a passage from the book of Professor Snouck Hurgrorje. He says :

“The law of Islam regulated the position of slaves with much equity. There is a great body of testimony from people who have spent a part of their lives among Muhammadan nations which does justice to the benevolent treatment which bondsmen receive from their masters there. Besides that, we are bound to state that in many Western countries, or countries under Western domination, whole groups of the population live under circumstances with which those of Muhammadan slavery may be compared with advantage.

“The only legal cause of slavery is prisonership of war, or born from slave parents. The captivity of enemies of Islam has not at all necessarily the effect of enslaving them, for the competent authorities may dispose of them in any other way; also in the way prescribed by modern international law or custom. In proportion to the realization of the political ideal of Islam, the number of its enemies must diminish and the possibility of enslaving men consequently decrease. Setting slaves free is one of the most meritorious works and at the same time a regular atonement for certain trans-



gressions of the sacred law. According to the Muhammadan principle, slavery is an institution destined to disappear."

The Holy Prophet has laid special stress on creating a fraternity between slaves and their masters. He has said: "Verily your slaves are your brothers. God has placed them under you. Whoever, then, has his brother under him, he should feed with food of which he himself eats and clothe him with such clothing as he himself wears. And do not impose upon him duty which is beyond his power to perform, or if you command him to do what he is unable to do then assist him in that affair." This principle of brotherhood between the master and his slave, which was carried out into practice evinces the largeness of the Prophet's heart. The Prophet also enjoined upon his followers the education of slave-girls to raise the status of the latter. "If a man," says the Prophet, "has a slave-girl in his possession, and he instructs her in polite accomplishments and gives her good education and then frees her and marries her he shall be rewarded with a double reward." This should be compared with the Roman and the

Christian ordinances which prohibited marriage between slaves and free men. Mr. Lane in his *Arabian Nights* bears testimony to the good treatment awarded to this class in Egyptian families. "They are," he says, "often instructed in plain needle work and embroidery and some times in music and dancing. Formerly, many of them possessed literary accomplishments to quote largely from esteemed poets or even to compose extempore verses." The Holy Prophet was very keenly interested in the kind treatment towards slaves. Once he said ;—Let no one of you say, when addressing his bondsman *Abdi* (my slave) or *Amti* (my maid servant), but let him say 'my young man,' 'my young maid,' and 'my young boy.' And another occasion he remarked:—"My friend Gabriel continued to enjoin kindness in slaves, until I thought people should never be taken as slaves." These were no lip homilies, but were reduced into most literal practice.

"Fear God in the matter of prayer and in the matter of those whom your right hand possess" were the words repeated by the Holy Prophet on his death-bed which

shows that no one else could feel so great an anxiety for the slave class. One can multiply instance after instance in his precepts and practice showing how he abhorred the ill-treatment of slaves. I quote one of his well-known dicta which sums up them all. He said: "He who beats his slave without fault or slaps him on the face, his atonement for that is freeing him." Abu Masud, one of the *Ansar* says: "I was beating a slave of mine; I turned back and saw the Holy Prophet, and said to him: "O Prophet of God, he is now free for the sake of God." The Prophet replied: "If you had not done it, verily fire would have touched you."

Among the evils of the institution was the custom of making slave-girls act as prostitutes to profit by this ignoble trade. It was strictly prohibited. The evil of concubinage was removed by making rightful wedlock essential for cohabitation with women in bondage. Marriage with slave girls was encouraged, and such an alliance paved the way for their enfranchisement. The Holy Quran says:—"And marry those among you who are single and those who are fit among your male-slaves and your female

slaves. If they are needy, Allah will make them free from want out of His grace, and Allah is amply giving, knowing .....and do not compel your slave-girls to prostitution.<sup>1</sup> During the life time of the Prophet the status of the slaves was immensely raised. They were treated by their masters as their equals or brothers. Abu Huraira, a companion of the Prophet saw a man riding and his slave running after him. Abu Huraira said to the man: "Take him behind you on the beast, O servant of God, verily he is your brother and his life is like your life." When Jerusalem was besieged, the Caliph Umar was requested to come in person to the city, because the chief patriarch of the place declared that he would surrender if the Caliph himself comes to settle the terms of peace. In this journey, the Caliph was accompanied by his servant, but they had only one camel to ride on. So they rode by turns. It happened that at the last stage of the journey it was the turn of the servant to ride. They reached the Muslim camp, and the General Obada saw that the servant was on the camel, while

the Commander of the Faithful was running after him. The General objected to it and suggested that it was not becoming of the dignity of a caliph. Umar said: "None has said like this before you, and your words will bring curse upon Muslims. Surely we were the most degraded of peoples and most despicable and the fewest of all. God gave us honour and greatness through Islam, and if we seek it now in other ways than Islam, God will bring us into disgrace." This instance shows how slaves and servants were treated by the Muslim rulers of early days. The Prophet himself gave his cousin Lady Zainub, in marriage to a slave and made his son Usama a commander of an army.

I have already said that the immediate liberation of the whole slave-class would have caused an economic upheaval. Islam, therefore, adopted gradual measures. The Quran has laid down:—"And to those of your slaves who desire a deed of manumission, execute it for them, if you know good in them and give them the property which God has given you."<sup>1</sup> The

words "if you know good in them" were explained by the Holy Prophet to mean "if you know they are good in some handicraft," by which they can earn their subsistence. The master is enjoined to give a portion of his wealth to his freed man to give him a good start in life. Muslims are also enjoined to contribute towards the price of emancipation of slaves. The Holy Prophet himself assisted Sulaiman of Persia in purchasing his freedom, by planting three hundred palm trees with his own hands, this being a condition of manumission. The other condition was with regard to the payment of a certain amount of money as ransom, for which subscription was raised. The Lady Ayisha, the Prophet's wife, similarly assisted a female slave in obtaining her freedom. These facts speak for themselves. Yet the Christian propagandists like professor Margoliouth have the courage to say that the idea of the abolition of slavery never occurred to the Prophet, or that it was Islam that engrafted slavery on humanity. But such Christian writers must know that from Moses to Jesus no prophet nor the so called redeemer of humanity ever trou-

bled himself to think of the slaves. The ignoble institution synchronised with the human race from its very beginning, and yet no prophet ever dreamt of dealings with it. It is only Muhammad who raised his voice against it. It should, however, be admitted that slavery has not yet died a natural death designed for it by Islam. Negroes are still seen in certain wealthy Arab houses, but responsibility for this, lies at others' doors. Islam abolished slavery with the single exception of war captivity, and if, as is reasonable, this kind of bondage cannot be strictly brought under the category of slavery, it may safely be said that the Holy Prophet banished slavery from the Muslim lands. It is, however, the European nations that revived it in Africa for supplying labour in colonies. In Africa the so called "savages" were easily induced to sell their country men. But it is a happy sign that Islam is making head way in Africa, and Bishop Fogarty of Damaraland has rightly observed: "It will make a real sense of brotherhood." The universal brotherhood established by Islam only, in the world, is a potent factor for bringing slavery

to an end, though war-captivity will, on the other hand, continue as long as war exists in the world. But, I would ask my Arab Co-religionists to reflect that, if they purchase slaves from these Negro lands, they are acting against the teachings of their own Prophet:"<sup>1</sup>

Thus Islam is the only religion, that has redeemed humanity from the long and time honoured curse of slavery; and therefore in the words of Syed Ameer Ali, "it remains for the Muslims to show the falseness of the aspersions cast on the memory of the great Prophet, by proclaiming in explicit terms that slavery is reproached by their faith and discountenanced by their code."<sup>2</sup>



## CHAPTER X.

### ISLAM AND SOCIALISM.

Socialism is the theory by which we seek, through the action of the central democratic authority, a better distribution, and in due subordination thereto, a better production of wealth than that which generally prevails through the activities of individuals or society. The leading idea of the socialist is to convert into general benefit what is now the gain of the few. "He shares this idea with the anarchist, the positivist, the co-operator and other reformers; but unlike them to secure his end he would employ the compulsory powers of the sovereign state, or the powers of the municipality delegated by the sovereign."<sup>1</sup> Socialism aims at securing benefits not for a few, a minority, or even a majority but for all citizens. Communism has the same end in view; and socialism and communism are sometimes confused in popular thought. But the communist need not be a socialist, he may be an anarchist, an open enemy of all modes of Government, while the socialist need not be a communist. The socialists of the present time, do not

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1. Encyclopaedia Britannica 11th Edition.

demand that all wealth be held in common. They demand only that the land and large workshops and the means and materials on large scale shall be owned by the state.<sup>1</sup> The cardinal principal of all socialistic theories is the decentralization of wealth. The socialist wants that the wealth may not be centred in the hands of the few. The centralization of wealth has invariably caused upheaval in society. It has undermined the foundations of great empires. The Roman empire was shaken through the existence of plebeians and patricians. Roman society was divided into two extremes. There was no middle class. The rich were rolling in wealth, and squandering it in all sorts of vices and pleasures; while the poor were suffering under abject poverty. The reaction of this state of affairs, was inevitable and it brought about the down-fall of Rome. The French Revolution also presented a historic drama of centralization of wealth. The national cry of "liberty, equality and fraternity" was the natural outcome of the tyranny exercised by the French aristocracy over the poor. In our own days

the political catastrophe of Russia which has annihilated the Imperial house of the Czars is again due to the unreasonable distribution of wealth and power. Bolshevism which has become a menace to the whole civilized world is only an extreme form of socialism. The modern movements of Bolshevism, communism, socialism, capitalism and the labour question have, with the advance of society, assumed a most acute and complicated form at present, but their origin may be traced back to the very birth of the human race ; because they deal with wealth or the means of subsistence, which have existed side by side with human life. Islam being the religion of humanity, could not ignore this important problem. The Quran has suggested the most reasonable distribution of wealth among the whole of mankind and has taken effective measures against its centralization.

Islam, as we have seen, is a democratic religion. The spirit of democracy prevails throughout its teachings. In politics as well as in all other social activities, it aims at the general welfare of all citizens. The Prophet, however, was not an idle dreamer. He was a prac-

tical reformer ; and, therefore, he has introduced through Islam a practical form of socialism, which is free from all the defects of the utopian socialism of the West. In this chapter I propose to examine the various steps which Islam has taken to realize the better distribution and production of wealth than in ordinary circumstances, in which man is generally given up to Mammon-worship. Firstly, Islam is against the centralization of wealth ; and, that is why the Quran has inaugurated the inheritance law by which the property of a deceased person is distributed among his children including females and other relatives. The English law of inheritance gives the deceased's property exclusively to the eldest son and thus contributes to the centralization of wealth. The Hindu law excludes the females from inheritance ; and while thus degrading woman-hood tends to circumscribe the circulation of wealth in a narrow circle of male issues. But the Islamic law aims at the decentralization of wealth, and distributes the heritage among all relations of the deceased. It gives due share to the daughters and thus circulates the wealth

to other families to which they are married. The Quran is explicit on these points:—

“Allah enjoins you concerning your children : the male shall have the equal of the portion of two females; then if they are more than two females, they shall have two-thirds of what the deceased has left, and if there is one, she shall have the half; and as for his parents, each of them shall have the sixth of what he has left if he has a child, but if he has no child and (only) his two parents inherit him, then his mother shall have the third; but if he has brothers, then his mother shall have the sixth after (the payment of) a bequest he may have bequeathed or a debt; your parents and your children, you know not which of them is the nearer to you in usefulness; this is an ordinance from Allah : surely Allah is Knowing, Wise.

“And you shall have half of what your wives leave if they have no child, but if they have a child, then you shall have a fourth of what they leave after (payment of) any bequest they may have bequeathed or a debt; and they shall have the fourth of what you leave if you have no child, but

if you have a child then they shall have eighth of what you leave after (payment of) a bequest you may have bequeathed or a debt, and if a man or a woman leaves property to be inherited by neither parents nor offspring, and he (or she) has a brother or a sister, then each of the two shall have the sixth but if they are more than that, they shall be sharer in the third after (payment of) any bequest that may have been bequeathed or a debt that does not harm (others); this is an ordinance from Allah: and Allah is Knowing Forbearing. These are Allah's limits and whoever obeys Allah and His Apostle, He will cause him to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide in them; and this is the great achievement.

“And whoever disobeys Allah and His Apostle and goes beyond His limits, He will cause him to enter fire to abide in it, and he shall have an abasing chastisement.”<sup>1</sup>

The white nations of Europe and America, and the coloured races of Asia and Africa, may well follow this Islamic law for the more reasonable distribution of wealth

and to the general betterment of human society.

Secondly, Islam disallows the baneful system of usury which has ever proved a curse for humanity, and has caused the centralization of wealth in the hands of a few at the expense of the majority. The Jews in Europe, and the *Banyas* in India are the cancer of society that have sapped the national vitality. The Government of India have been ever keen to take steps to safeguard the ryots from the clutches of the usurers. The Land Alienation Act, which prohibited the passage of the land owned by the agricultural classes to non-agricultural was meant to protect, from the money lending class, the peasantry of India which is the backbone of the country. The *Sahukara* Bill which is yet receiving the attention of the Government is another attempt to the same direction; and proposes limitations on the heinous trade of the money-lender. But Islam has cut down the very roots of the evil. It has disallowed usury: and has thus saved society from all the evils which are inseparably connected with the money-lending business.

The Quran speaks of usury in most despicable terms. "Those who swallow down usury cannot rise except as one, whom the devil has prostrated by his touch, does rise. That is because they say—Trading is only like usury and Allah has allowed trading and forbidden usury."<sup>1</sup> Again, "Allah does not bless usury and He causes charitable deeds to prosper."<sup>2</sup> In another place the Quran says: "O you who believe! do not devour usury making additions again and again, and be careful of your duty."<sup>3</sup> And again:—"And whatever you lay out at usury so that it may increase in the property of man it shall be no increase with Allah and whatever you give in charity desiring Allah's pleasure it is these persons that shall get manifold."<sup>4</sup> It is significant that charity and usury are mentioned simultaneously. It denotes that the system of advancing money on usury is against the spirit of charity and large heartedness. No doubt, it makes man greedy; and deprives him of high morals. It makes man in the words of the Quran unable "to rise." And the history of the world bears testimony to the truth of this statement. The



*banya* of India is the same *banya* as he was in the days of Akbar. He is entirely absorbed in Mamon-worship; and is absolutely indifferent to all what is going on in the world. Such people can never change. They can never prosper. But the Quran has come to elevate humanity. That is why it has prohibited usury, the root cause of speculation and all other vices of capitalism.

Thirdly, the Quran gives an impetus to commerce and trade; and thus wants to keep money in circulation. It is an important principle of economics that the wealth of a country is to be judged by the circulation of its money and not by its hoarded wealth. Trade keeps all citizens busy and contented. By the fluctuations of business money is always changing hands. It does not become the monopoly of the few, as in the case of the money lending class. Everyone is hopeful of making money. The national spirit is always up. The enterprising genius is invariably at working. That is why the Quran has inculcated the importance of commerce on its followers and has allowed them to do business even in the days of

pilgrimage.<sup>1</sup> On Friday too they are ordered to disperse at once after the prayer and seek after their business. "But when the prayer is ended, then disperse abroad in the land and seek of Allah's grace and remember Allah much that you may be successful."<sup>2</sup> The expression "Allah's grace" in this verse as in many other places of the Quran means wealth acquired by business. It shows that Islam unlike other religions does not hate worldly possessions. Rather it takes them as the bounties of God. The whole trend of the Quranic teachings is that men should invest their money in business, so that labour may get work, and the money may be kept in circulation. And that is the only way of increasing the national wealth. It was through the inspiration of the Quran that the early sons of Islam were a nation of traders.

Fourthly, Islam has inaugurated the most useful institution of poor rates or *zakat*. It is a tax on the rich for the uplift of the poor. I have already discussed it in a preceding chapter of this book. But here I

must add that the payment of this tax is so important that Abu Bakr the first Caliph, had to wage war against those who refused to pay it; because the whole national life depended on its payment. A country which is financially backward; or the citizens of which are labouring under fiscal disabilities can make no progress. Islam wants that its every citizen must be a useful member of society and must earn his respectable living. That is why it has provided a permanent national budget for the maintenance of the poor and the help of the needy. In 1921 the cabinet of England was discussing the advisability of a national pool to meet the demand of the labour for a considerable increase in its wages. But Islam has already established a national pool in the form of the poor rates.

I cannot conclude this chapter without making a reference to the labour question, which has assumed an international aspect in these days. The Prophet Muhammad is a great champion of the labour and the poor. He is the saviour of humanity. He is the only Prophet who abolished slavery and liberated slaves from their long bondage.

The labour too is equally indebted to him. "Give the labourer," says the Prophet, "his wages before his perspiration dries up." These words from the blessed lips of the Prophet are pregnant with profound significance. They imply that an adequate remuneration should not be withheld from the worker, and that the payment of the wages should be prompt. In the East, as in the West, the poor workman is generally maltreated: and is seldom handsomely paid for his labour. The Prophet wanted to eradicate this social evil. Although in his days there was no labour trouble, yet he was gifted with the Divine insight and with his inward eye he saw the social wrongs which were the inevitable sequel to the unjust treatment of the labour. He realized that the labour was the stamina, the backbone of a country, and any discontent in it should necessarily result in general chaos in the whole fabric of civil life. The Hindu religion and the Christian church have done nothing to solve the labour question. In India the labour is kept trodden down. The caste system introduced by the Hindu religion is based

upon the principal that the labour class should be kept in perfect and perpetual subordination and should be given no chance to improve its status. The Christian church is also well known for making and encouraging invidious distinction between the rich and the poor. The materialistic tendencies of the age, which induce people to worship Mammon all the more, have made the state of things from bad to worse. The labourer has become, however, awakened to his degraded condition and is making a hard struggle to gain his legitimate rights. In England the labour movement is a constant source of anxiety for the Government. In Russia, it has assumed the form of Bolshivism, which is a great menace to the whole of civilized world. That is all due to the fact that Christianity has done nothing to meet the legitimate demands of the labour.

In Islam, however, labour has a dignified position. The Prophet has always spoken highly of one who earns his living by the sweat of his brow. There is no disgrace, no stigma, no social bar for a workman in Islam. The Holy Prophet was himself

a worker. In Medina he was the king. Yet he would discharge all sorts of the domestic duties with his own hands. Maulvi Muhammad Ali in his *Muhammad the Prophet* writes :—

“Simplicity and sincerity were the key notes of the Prophet’s character. He loved virtue for its own sake. High morals which formed an attractive feature of his character were not an acquisition with him but were ingrained in his very nature. He would do all sorts of things with his own hands. If he wanted to give alms to a beggar he would do this with his own hands. He would assist his wives in their household duties. He would milk his own goats, patch his own clothes and mend his own shoes. In person would he dust the house, and he would tie his camel and look after it personally. No work was too low for him. He worked like a labourer in the construction of his mosque. Again when a ditch was being dug to fortify Medina against the impending enemy incursion he was seen at work among his rank and file. In person would he do shopping, not only for his household but also for his neighbours and friends. In brief, he never despised any

work, however humble, notwithstanding the dignity of his position as a prophet and king. He thus demonstrated through personal example that a man's calling, whether high or low, does not constitute the criterion of his status."

Thus the Prophet has glorified labour. He was a practical reformer, and sought to infuse the spirit of work into his people. Moses escapes from the enemy in a miraculous way. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad digs a ditch round Medina to defend it and thus sets an example for the posterity. Miracles are not wrought every day. Nations are not built with miracles. The foundation stone of human character, which plays an important part in the formation of national life, is raised on the solid rock of honest labour. Therefore, the Prophet, invariably in practice and precept brought home to his people that their glory lay in being honest workmen. He has shown many miracles. But they were all attended with honest spirit for work. For instance, he faces the enormous odds of the enemy, well equipped, and well trained, with a small band of his followers untrained and underfed

and yet he inflicts the crushing defeat on the foe. Is it not a miracle? But the spirit of work is also there. The Prophet has thus beautifully blended together the spiritual and physical aspects of human nature and he wants a harmonious development of them both side by side. There have been Divine teachers who have laid stress only on the spiritual progress of man with beautiful homilies, but their precepts were meant for the special circumstances of their own age. The gentle Nazariene stands conspicuous for the humble submity of his ethics. Yet it was a special dose for the custom ridden and calous-hearted Jews. Muhammad appears, on the other hand, to give humanity an ever lasting code, to teach us "all the truth"; therefore the tenets of his religion are based upon universal truths and aim at the all-round up-lift of the human race.



## CHAPTER XI.

### ISLAM AND NATIONALISM.

With the progress of human civilization, the world has been so many "isms." We hear of "socialism," of "capitalism," of "bolshivism" of "communism" and so on. We have briefly noticed all of them in a previous chapter, and here propose to deal with "nationalism" which is the most important subject of the day; because almost in all countries of Asia where the parliamentary Government does not exist, the national movement is on foot.

Originally the national movement was a reaction against the autocratic power of the king, who in ancient times enjoyed a sort of Divine authority. The people suffered long under bad sovereigns, who indulged in indiscriminate vices at the cost of the state. Sometimes idiots sat on Imperial thrones and issued hysterical commands. A Roman Emperor is said to have once summoned his courtiers in the mid of night. They attended the palace, and waited for about two hours with sleepy eyes. At length His Imperial Majesty appeared, clothed in a fancy dress of a woman. The courtiers bowed down

before him to make a formal homage; and the emperor passed away smiling and clapping with his hands. He wanted only to make a show of his fancy dress. It was, therefore, but natural that a reaction must set in against the authority of such kings; and that reaction took the form of nationalism. People began to question why should we be governed by such idiots why should we be governed by a single head who feels often giddy with authority; why should we not govern for ourselves.

A nationalist, therefore, stands for the independence of his people, against the absolute authority of an autocrat. He advocates the democratic form of Government; in which a people governs itself. And as, we have seen, Islam also wants to establish this mode of Government. The Holy Quran has clearly said: "Government is to be based upon mutual counsel."<sup>1</sup> And in another place the Holy Book enjoins the Prophet to take counsel with his followers in state matters.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, the Prophet and his immediate successors always consulted their people and abided, even at the cost of their

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1. XLII : 38

2. III : 158

own opinion, by the resolutions which the council of Muslim community adopted. The student of the Islamic History knows that at the time of the battle of Uhad, the Prophet was of opinion that Muslim should fortify themselves in the town of Medina, and should not face the enemy in an open field. But the council of companions, which consisted of many youths full of boyish spirit and energy, voted for meeting the enemy in open battle field, at some distance from the town. As the majority was in favour of the latter view, the Prophet had to give up his personal opinion. In short, the spirit of democracy pervades throughout the teachings of Islam; and our religion is a strong advocate of the democratic form of government. According to Islam a government ought to be based on the will of the people, and not on the physical force of Imperialism. Islam is, therefore, a staunch supporter of a national movement, provided it is carried on in a constitutional way with the sole object of safeguarding the interests of the people.

But like all living things, the words of a living language too, undergo a change, with the change in the views of the people. Nationalism,

as we have seen, was originally the reaction against the power of the king. It was meant for shifting the centre of authority from a king to a nation. But power generally fosters vices. It did the same thing here. When power was placed in the hands of nations instead of kings, the former fell a prey to the same vices as the latter. With nationalism, nations or their representatives took the place of kings; and now *they* began to play the role of autocrat sovereigns. They began to domineer and tyrannize over the weaker nations. The exploitation of the weaker nations by the ruling ones is a matter of common experience. Therefore, a simultaneous change came into the significance of the word "nationalism." It began to denote a creed for the national glory and national superiority. The ruling nations of the word began to think that they were born to govern and exploit and were entitled to enjoy special privileges, denied to others. The air of prestige, and national honour became their chief concern. They became absorbed in a sort of national conceit. The Romans in their imperial days thought that they were the chosen people and above all

humiliation. A Roman slave was arrested and beaten by the orders of the Governor of Sicily and it is said that at every flash of the stripe the slave cried out: "I am a Roman". He thought that his being a Roman was a sure guarantee of saving him from every sort of disgrace and trouble. The national pride fostered by nationalism, generally rouses the national aspirations and promotes racial prejudices which often result in social and political upheavals. The bloody arena of the Great War which will ever remain a blot on the face of human civilization was after all due to Germany's love for national aspirations. She wanted to extend her dominions on the ruins of the British and the French possessions. This phase of nationalism which engenders racial superiority, racial hatred and racial distinctions; and eventually brings about human bloodshed and political catastrophies, has been vehemently condemned by Islam. The Quran speaks of humanity as one without any distinction of caste and colour. The geographical boundries do not count with the Holy Book. It says: "And people are naught but a single nation, so they disagree

and had not a word already gone before from your Lord, the matter would have certainly been decided between them in respect of which they disagree.<sup>1</sup> Again: "O you men! surely we have created you of a male and a female and made you tribes and families, that you may know each other, surely most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful of his duty."<sup>2</sup> This verse clearly lays down that one's honour does not depend upon the family or nation one belongs to, but on one's own actions. The division of tribes or nations is simply meant to know each other; and is not the basis of any precedence. The Holy Prophet is also reported to have said: "There is no superiority for the Arab to the non-Arab and nor for a non-Arab to the Arab. All of you are the sons of Adam." Thus colour, creed, and language, the community of which is the sole basis of a "nation" in our modern times have no recognition in Islam. A Muslm does not think of a single country. His sympathies are universal. He loves his mother-land, no doubt; but he would never assert his superiority on the ground

of his being an Indian or a African. His whole honour rests on his personal character and his religion; which has established a universal brotherhood of man. He is the harbinger of the Divine Message, which is meant for the whole of humanity; and which is the dearest thing to his heart. He will never hate a foreigner for his nationality; because he does not believe in distinctions of colour and creed. He will never resort to violence simply on racial grounds; because his religion is cosmopolitan. He loves all and hates none. The history of India for the last 25 years is an eloquent testimony to it. There have been political agitations and political murders. There have been out burst of bombs and open manifestations of violence. There has been a huge, persistent propaganda against the British Government; and some times open violence has been preached against the "satanic Government." But Maslins as a community have always kept aloof from the creed of political violence. Why? For the simple reason that from the religious point of view they do not believe in racial hatred; and they do not want to promote it. They are quite prepared to

serve their country in a constitutional way ; but the spirit of racial tension, with which the political atmosphere of India is unfortunately saturated at present is foreign to Muslims. I am not a politician ; and have no claims to judge precisely the Hindus' mentality towards Indian politics. But from what I have gathered, as a lay-man from the Hindu pulpit and press, I can safely say that the present programme for civil disobedience and the boycott of foreign goods is not a fair and honest attempt at constitutional reform in the administration of the country. It smells of racial prejudices. A "nationalist" hates a foreigner for his being a foreigner. But a Muslim cannot do this. A Muslim will never kill a Hindu or a Christian simply for his being a Hindu or a Christian. But there have been cases in which Englishmen have been murdered at the hands of "nationalists" simply for their being Englishmen. The cowardly murder of Mr. Saunders and the still more cowardly attempt at the Viceroy's life will illustrate my statement.

I think the present political situation of India and the campaign of civil disobedience are due to two reasons:-



Firstly, the Hindu religion is, and has always been, a factor in aggravating racial distinctions and colour prejudices. Within its own fold, it has made many water-tight compartments and has created an unbridgeable gulf between the Hindus and the "Untouchables." Secondly, the spirit of modern nationalism, which, as we have seen, fosters racial hatred has been borrowed by Indians from the Western nations. The remedy of this evil, however, which prevails in the East as well as in the West, lies in Islam. Co-operation and mutual good-will are the things needed most to-day. A united and prosperous humanity ought to be our goal, and this is the creed of Islam. Let the East and the West try to reach this goal. The Congress has seen that its claims for non-violence have been futile. The recent disturbances at Karachi, Chittagong, Sholapur, Calcutta and Peshawar have proved, if any proof is wanted, that the Congress creed of non-violence is simply a farce which can bring no blessing. The so-called "apostle of peace" seems to have no control over the masses. He should take a lesson from these unfortunate happenings.

It is, however, significant that the Muslims as a community, have been conspicuously aloof from the movement of civil disobedience. Their leaders, with a few exceptions, here and there, which are a worthy of notice, have unanimously advised their co-religionists not to participate in the present movement, which is far from being a fair and constitutional attempt at political advance. His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad, who is not only the premier ruling chief of India; but has also won from the Muslims, for his religious zeal and unique munificence to uphold the cause of Islam, the title of *Muhy-ul-millat Waddin* (the Reviver of the Community and the Faith) has recently issued a manifesto concerning the present political situation of India, and has counselled his co-religionists and other Indians to maintain peace and order; and to achieve political advance by constitutional representation in the Round Table Conference, which is going to be held in London to consider the question of political reforms in India. The manifesto runs thus:—

“In common with every true well-wisher of India I have been caused much distress

and anxiety by the course of recent events in this country. Matters have now reached a pass when I would be failing in my duty not only to my State but to India and the Empire, if I remain silent any longer, more especially as I am given to understand that my co-religionists look to me for a lead at a time when a crisis is impending in the governance of India as a whole. At this juncture, the endeavour of all, and more particularly of those in a position of responsibility and trust, should be directed to finding a solution of India's difficulties in a form of Government for the future that will command the support of all reasonable men of every creed and of every party as being best calculated to ensure the enduring peace and prosperity of the country in general. To this end, a Round Table Conference is being convened in London. As the Faithful Ally of the British Government, it is my intention to make towards its success the contribution that is due from my State and from my House. A few months ago I gave utterance, on a public occasion, to the above sentiments, and announced the policy that I proposed to



HIS EXALTED HIGHNESS THE NIZAM



follow. But success of the Conference can only be achieved if all creeds and parties co-operate in the presentation of their respective cases in an atmosphere of friendliness and goodwill. I earnestly appeal to all, and more particularly to my co-religionists in India to realise that their common welfare lies in orderly progress, and in the provision in the future system of Government of such safeguards as will secure to all communities and interests their rightful position in their Motherland. Let everyone, therefore, set himself against any attempt to destroy the foundations of order and range himself boldly on the side of constituted authority in the State or Province wherein his lot is cast. For myself, I take my stand as my ancestors took theirs, on the time-honoured Treaties that exist between my State and the British Government. In these it has been declared that "the friends and enemies of either shall be the friends and enemies of both." To this declaration I have always adhered and, God willing, will ever adhere."<sup>1</sup>

Similarly His Higness the Nawab Sahib, Bahawalpur, who rules over the premier Mus-

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1. *The Hyderabad Bulletin* of 7th May 1930.

lim State in the Panjab, and rightly, represents the ancient House of the Abbaside Caliphs, to whom the world owes so much, has issued a manifesto in which His Highness has fully dealt with the present political situation of the country, and has reminded his co-religionists of their religious duty at this juncture. This manifesto reads as follows :—

“I have watched with great concern and deep regret the course of events in British India. Every true Indian must view with poignant grief the welter of anarchy and lawlessness into which the ignorant masses are being dragged. While there can be no objection to the legitimate expression of political views and aspirations, it is unfortunate that the ways and means advocated and adopted by the extremist school of political thought of Indian nationalism have been productive of more harm than good. They cannot possibly be justified or defended on grounds of religious principles, or even for reasons of political expediency.

“The so-called peaceful movement of civil disobedience has during the past few months amply demonstrated its mischievous and

violent potentialities throughout the length and breadth of the country. The unfortunate happenings at distant places like Peshawar, Chittagong, Mymensingh, Sholapar and Dacca (to mention a few important centres of violent demonstrations), causing an infinite amount of human suffering, loss of life and property, are sufficient to prove, if any proof is needed, that noisy pretensions paraded on behalf of the peaceful character of the campaign have been exposed to be absolutely false and unfounded.

“The country has been plunged into a welter of misery, bloodshed and chaos; general unrest and anarchy are the order of the day; all respect for law and constituted authority is fast disappearing, and the peaceful administration of this unfortunate land has been upset and unsettled

“The ignorant and the unsophisticated masses are being innoculated with a rebellious and revolutionary poison, and the lessons of racial hatred are being industriously imparted and inculcated into the impressionable and unbalanced minds of the younger generation.

“The great “apostle of peace” may decide



any day to sit down in sack cloth and ashes over the disastrous result of his peaceful and non-violent message to the world, but no amount of repentance and no plausible explanations could exonerate him of the sinful achievements of the line of action recommended and pursued by him for the emancipation of the motherland.

“Facts are facts, and must be stated, however unpleasant their narration may be. It is an axiomatic truth that no sound political progress can be achieved without respect for law and order. Mere catch-words and violent political doctrines cannot bring the millenium. All progress must evolve in an orderly manner.

“At this juncture, the recent manifesto issued by H. E. H. the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Ruler of the premier State, has been thrice welcome. The Nizam’s timely warning to his own subjects and the Musalmans of India, coming as it does from a very responsible and friendly quarter, is bound to carry conviction with his co-religionists, as well as with the saner section of non-Musalman communities.

“He has given the right lead, and I hasten





to endorse and lend my unqualified support to every word and sentiment contained in his memorable utterance in the best interest of the country, and of the Musalmans in particular.

### RELIGION'S COMMAND.

“Apart from my position as a Ruler of an Indian State, pledged to duty and traditions of loyalty and allegiance to the Paramount Power, I have in my private and personal capacity as a citizen of this country, given my most careful and anxious attention to the problems, affecting the vital interests of the teeming population of the country, and the Musalman community in particular of the Punjab and Sindh Provinces, whose needs and wants I am in a privileged position to understand and appraise correctly.

“After due deliberation, I have come to the unhesitating conclusion that the call of duty at the present moment is very clear and must be cheerfully and promptly responded to, in the best interest of all concerned.

“Religion, which is the dearest object and the most cherished object of a Musalman's

reverence, must regulate all his actions, whether in private or public life, and must furnish true guidance for his activities in the domain of politics, as elsewhere.

“The Prophet has in clear and unequivocal terms condemned all seditions and disturbances—*Alfitnat-u-ashadd-u-minal qatl*. Sedition being much worse than murder, the holy saying should, once for all, set a seal on all mischief-mongering and seditious activities.

“Again, the Holy Book lays down the mandate for the guidance of the Muslims—*La tufsidoo fil arz*, (do not create disturbances on earth).

“The order is clear and admits of no legal quibbling. It is certainly a matter of considerable satisfaction that the Muslims, as a community, have so far refrained from participating in the civil disobedience movement, but unfortunately there are signs that attempts are being made to seduce them to join the movement.

“I, therefore, appeal to them (particularly to my Muslim brethren and neighbours in the Punjab and Sindh Provinces) with all

the earnestness and sincerity at my command to resist the temptation of transgressing the dictates of their sacred religion, and to keep steadfast to their resolution of achieving political advance by really peaceful and constitutional methods.

“These methods, I am confident, in the final run would be found to be more effective and less unpleasant. The present unfriendly policy of the extreme political section is bound to embitter and accentuate differences and will probably lead to nowhere.

My earnest appeal to my people is—“don’t lose heart and don’t lose your head; and everything will be all-right in its own good time.” The signs are propitious at the present moment, and the British nation can and do fully understand your difficulties. They are responsive to the desire and demand of the country for political development on peaceful and constitutional lines, and it would be sheer insanity to reject the programme of co-operation and the preferred hand of friendship.

“Fortunately for the country, we have two statesmen of outstanding ability, gifted with large-hearted sympathy and sound

judgment in H. E. Lord Irwin, the present Viceroy and Mr. Wedgwood Benn, the Secretary of State for India, and from their public utterances it is abundantly clear that they are quite prepared and willing to help the Indian cause in the efforts for political advancement.

"India can certainly have no greater friend and stronger advocate than H. E. Lord Irwin.

"I should, therefore, very strongly suggest that every effort should now be made to harmonise rival discords and to cut asunder the hostilities for the purpose of concentrating on the success of the Round-Table Conference in a spirit of mutual good-will and co-operation.

"This attitude alone would achieve a practical and liberal solution of the difficulties of the problems of the future governance of the country.

"As the Ruler of an Indian State, I need hardly repeat that all my resources are at the command of the Paramount Power, for the fulfilment of the object nearest my heart ; namely that there should be peace on earth and good-will in Heaven."<sup>1</sup>

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1. *The Civil and Military Gazette* for 6th June 1930.

These valuable utterances from the two Muslim ruling chiefs are candid and sincere appeals for peace and order ; and in a way reveal the key note of the Muslim character. No government is possible without maintaining order and peace ; and this is *the* thing for which the Muslim rulers have expressed their deep anxiety. This shows that the Muslims are specially gifted with the qualities essential to government ; and if they are given a larger share in the administration of the country, they would discharge the duties entrusted to them to the entire satisfaction of the ruler and the ruled.



## CHAPTER XII.

### ISLAM : THE FUTURE RELIGION OF THE WORLD.

In the preceding pages we have seen how Islam has contributed towards the civilization of the world ; and how its teachings have the potentialities of achieving the millenium. Islam has played a most important part in making the world what it is, and the religion of the great Prophet of Arabia is undoubtedly destined to make still greater contributions to the progress of humanity. The ideal state of society, which is the goal of Islam, has not yet been reached. The world will take a long time to reach that stage, but as the past shows, it will surely reach it through Islam alone. The kingdom of Heaven has come in the shape of Islam. Now it is for us to realize it in practice. There is no phase of life for which our religion has not given us a lead ; there is no situation in the world for which Islam has not made adequate provisions. In fact, Islam has come, in the words of the Quran "to lead us to light from darkness." And it has really done so. In the promotion of knowledge and science, in the cultivation of highest morals, bringing humanity to the borders of Divinity,

in the reformation and uplift of mankind ; in the formation of best canons for the governance of kingdoms, in the promulgation of the most enlightened ethics of war, in raising the status of women ; in enfranchising the slaves, in framing the laws for the better distribution of wealth ; in inculcating the spirit of true and healthy nationalism, and in expounding a creed of cosmopolitan Deity, and thus establishing a real Brotherhood of man, Islam has done a unique service, to humanity. It has elevated mankind. It has made men *better* men than they had been without it. If religion can do all this ; and Islam has surely done it ; I do not understand what will be the state of those who are after deserting religion. To a Muslim, however, his religion is his all. His very life depends upon it. With him no progress is possible without religion. Islam stands for progress and civilization. Plain living and high thinking is the motto of every true Muslim. Islam, as we have seen, wants to dye us with Divine morals. It wants us to subjugate every thing in the universe and make use of it for our purpose. It wants to make us vice-regents of God on the

earth. If all this is not wanted, I do not know what the word "civilization" means in the dictionary of the enemies of religion.

Thus one of the salient features of our faith is that it is the religion of life. It does not shun the world, nor does it advocate asceticism. "There is no asceticism in Islam" says the Prophet. To Hindus, the world was an illusion (*maya*). To Buddhists, it was a place of misery, and all its pleasures and comforts had to be avoided with a view to attain Nirvana or salvation. According to Christianity man was born in sin and was destined to die in perdition, if he did not avail himself of the vicarious atonement. Belief in Jesus, blood is the be-all-and-the-end-all of the Christian church. No religion ever enjoined its followers to study nature and make use of it in human life. But Islam has laid the greatest stress upon it. The Quran explicitly says:—"Most surely in the creation of the heaven and the earth, and the alternations of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends down from clouds to give life with it to the earth after its death, and spreads in it all kinds of

animals ; and changing of winds and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth, there are signs for the people who understand.”<sup>1</sup> In this verse we are clearly told that in the creation of the heavens and the earth, in the changing of the day and the night, in the commerce and trade carried on by ships, by which men gain profit, in the rain-water, which gives new life to the animal as well as to the vegetable worlds, in the changing of winds which bring clouds, there are signs for those who ponder over the works of God. The Holy Prophet is also reported to have said that “one hour’s meditation on the works of God is better than seventy years’ prayers.” The history of human civilization bears testimony to these tenets of Islam. Our modern inventions which have made the world what it is, are due to our study of nature and meditation on the Divine laws obtaining in the universe. Thus in Islam religion and science coincide. If religion is based upon the will of God it must testify the established truths of science. Science and religion are, however, often said to be antagonistic to

each other. But this is due to a misconception of religion. A true religion cannot be against scientific truths, because both of them emanate from one great source, God. Science is nothing but the Divine laws working in the universe. And religion is admittedly the will of God revealed in a heavenly book. Now, the source of these two is one and the same ; therefore they must not clash with each other. But the wrong conception of religion has made science an enemy of it. That is why there has been a long conflict between religion and science ; a graphic account of which is given in the eloquent pages of Drapper. As the superstructure of religion was generally raised upon false dogmas, it sustained an utter defeat at the hands of science. The Christian Church kept people in the dark for centuries, condemning knowledge and science as heretic pursuits. But truth is always victorious. Science after long persecutions at the hands of the Church eventually won the day, and Christianity gave way before it, yet it is curious that science that had driven back religion into oblivion came itself to the latter's rescue,

and saved it from the clutches of atheism and scepticism.

Belief in the Deity is the most important tenet of all religions. With the progress of science, however, this belief was thrown into the back ground. It was breathing its last in the West, when a scientific discovery changed the whole situation. Biology, a century ago, could find no purpose in the working of nature. Nature was supposed to be blind, and it was assumed that its freaks and blunders had given, in a haphazard way, the different shapes to matter. Evidently it dealt a death blow to the belief in the existence of God. But subsequently the scientific research discovered that in the universe there were governing principles which science called law and order. Thus the so called blunders of nature, in the light of new discovery, appeared to be various orders of a well-organized system which obeyed one universal law. Law and obedience to it was seen pervading the whole cosmos. It was realized that nature was *not* blind ; rather it was following a prescribed course, under a prescribed law. It was not the dead matter of former biology with no scheme or purpose

before it, but something which showed and possessed law-abidingness. This discovery revolutionized the whole province of scientific research. The conception of "matter" was entirely changed. To avoid, therefore, the old associations, which the word "matter" conjured up before the human mind, a new name was proposed to signify the new attribute of the matter. The name chosen was "Law Substance," denoting that this substance is invariably obedient to a law. It was also further ascertained that this universal law is a curious collection of antithesis, working ultimately for one common goal. Every element was working in a way antagonistic to the requirements of the other, and yet it contributed to the Great Harmony. Heterogeneity was found everywhere, and yet out of this heterogeneity came out homogeneity. Conflicting elements work in harmony for one great end. This phenomenon of nature compelled the biologists to believe in the working of *one* Hand, that ruled nature and brought its discord into concord. The universe may be likened to a big organ of music. Its chords emit different tunes, high

and low, and yet played by the master Hand of its Creator produce an exquisite music that fills every hearer with rapturous joy. This harmony in the universe created a new creed ; which is known as Monism. Further research in this direction has established that the activities of the Law Substance subject to certain laws as they are, are subject to a design as well. Every thing in the world is working for a specified object, and has a special part to play. Apparently jarring elements of the universe really stand in supplementary or complementary relation to each other, and are progressing not aimlessly but towards a certain set design. It has been further proved that the accomplishment of a design is not carried out in a haphazard way. It evinces a great intelligence, coupled with pre-measurement. Science has thus led us to believe in one working Hand that rules the universe with law and intelligence, that puts the different elements of nature to work in order to achieve the great object, and that creates out of heterogeneity a homogeneity. Evolution is also another verity discovered by science. Everything in the world attains to its per-



fection by following a course of evolution. In brief, science worships Law, Monism, Design, Intelligence, and Evolution. And these are the chief attributes of the God of Islam, called Allah in the Quran. I quote below a few verses from the Holy Book, throwing light on the subject, and leave it to the reader to judge how beautifully the Word of God has depicted the chief attributes of the Supreme Being :—

- (1) All praise is due to God Who is the *evolver* of all the worlds. <sup>1</sup>
- (2) God is the source of the *law* that receives *obedience* from every thing. <sup>2</sup>
- (3) O men ! serve your Lord Who created you and those before you *so that you may* guard against evil. <sup>3</sup>
- (4) He it is Who created *for you* that is in the earth. <sup>4</sup>
- (5) Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, *then guided* (to its Goal). <sup>5</sup>
- (6) Rabb is He Who gave everything its shape *measure* and *quantity* of *materials* to bring it to its perfec-

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1. I : 1

2. III : 82;

3. II : 21;

4. II : 29;

5. XX : 49-50

tion and then put on the right path *to reach the Goal*.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it will be seen that Islam is in perfect harmony with the scientific discoveries. The more the world advances in knowledge and science, the more will it be convinced of the truth of Islam. And undoubtedly, we are living in a scientific age. The days of superstition and blind faith are gone for ever. Credulity has no future before it. Ritual and ceremonial have no place in the modern world. In this present age of ours everything must be based upon truth and facts. And that is exactly what the Quran taught fourteen hundred years ago. It clearly said: "And most of them (people) do not follow anything but conjecture; surely conjecture will not avail aught against the truth."<sup>2</sup> Again, "Say: are the blind and the seeing alike, or can the darkness and the light be equal?"<sup>3</sup> Thus observation, which is the basic principle of modern science has been taught by the Quran. The Holy Book does not demand from us a blind faith, but a faith based upon observation and conviction. Islam, therefore, is a great champion of scientific

research, and that is why the early Muslims played a most important part in the revival of learning and science.

Islam, however, does not only inculcate on us the study of nature to make use of it in human civilization; but in fact our religion, being the universal religion, is itself based upon human nature. "Set up your face," says the Holy Quran "right for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah, in which He has made men—there is no altering in Allah's creation, that is the right religion, but most people do not know."<sup>1</sup> This verse clearly lays down that the "right religion" is based upon human nature, which is the same all over the world, for "there is no altering in God's creation" and hence there must be only one religion for the whole of humanity. This brings me to the catholicity of Islam, about which I have said so much in the preceding pages of this book. But here I must invite the particular attention of the reader to one point. This world of ours is now moving towards universalism. Every aspect of human life is being considered

from an international point of view. There are international laws, international societies, and international leagues. The League of Nations is a living reality of the present age. Its existence is an eloquent testimony to the cosmopolitan spirit pervading all over the globe. Thus the world has now realized the truth enunciated by the Holy Quran that the whole of humanity is "a single nation" and must be treated as such.<sup>1</sup> The problems of human life and the differences arising among the various sections of mankind must be settled as the differences among the various members of a single family. This is the present view of the International politics; and the world is fast moving towards it. The question of disarmament by which all the naval and military powers of Europe have agreed to cut down their budgets for the Army and the Navy is based upon this principle. If religion a factor in the human life (and surely it is); if it is not a bundle of mere ritual and dogmas, it should also be subjected to the same principle, and its differences, too, should be decided by a League of Faiths. The Quran has clearly

drawn up the programme of such a League in these words :—

“Say : O followers of the Book ! come to an equitable proposition between us and you, that we shall not serve any but Allah and that we shall not associate aught with Him, and that some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah ; but if they turn back then say : “Bear witness we are Muslims”<sup>1</sup> i.e., we submit to this principle. The words “followers of the Book ” are applicable to all religions of the world because each of them follows a heavenly Book. That is why Ali, the fourth Caliph of the Prophet, put the Zorastrians in the category of the followers of the Book. This verse chalks out a line of action, which can harmonize the different religions of the world. And this line of action is that they should agree to accept the “equitable proposition,” the common factor, among them. If we convene a League of Faiths and the representative of every religion agrees to accept the common factor of all religions, the religion thus evolved will be a true religion, stripped of all alloy of human imagination and human interpola-

tion. Let me briefly work out this proposition for the convenience of the reader. Take, for instance, the question of the oneness, or the plurality of gods; and refer it to the League of Faiths for decision. The vote of Islam is for one God; the vote of Christianity for *one* into three; and the vote of Hinduism is for one plus about 33 crores of gods. Despite the fact that Christianity and Hinduism believe in the plurality of gods, they do believe in *one* Supreme God as well. In fact they believe in one into three or one into hundreds and thousands; while Islam believes in the absolute Unity. Therefore, the unity of God is the equitable proposition, the common factor, among them. And this is *the* voice, *the* echo of every human heart. Does it not testify that a true religion is based upon human nature—a verity declared by the Holy Quran? Similarly other knotty problems of religion which have baffled the human mind for centuries, can be settled by the same principle of the Quran.

Islam is thus destined to be the future religion of the world; for, firstly, it is the religion that patronizes science and learning; and surely much of the human progress

depends upon the progress of Knowledge and Science. Secondly, it is a religion of cosmopolitan character, en-compassing the truths.<sup>1</sup> of all religions, and recognising humanity as one big family of God,<sup>2</sup> whose welfare and prosperity is its chief aim. Peace on earth and good-will in Heaven is the sole object of Islam and that is what the world is longing for.

1. The Holy Quran XCVIII : 3

2. X : 19

## CHAPTER XIII.

### ISLAM : A MISSIONARY RELIGION

#### THE SPREAD OF ISLAM IN INDIA.

And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and these it is that shall be successful (the Holy Quran III : 103).

Islam has long been recognized as a missionary religion, not only by its own followers but by the followers of other religions as well. Whether Professor Max Muller had in mind or not the text of the Holy Quran which I have quoted above; but the fact remains that speaking in Westminster Abbey in December of 1923, he classified the principal religions of the world into two heads; (1) missionary and (2) non-missionary. Evidently under the latter head fall Judaism, Brahmanism and Zoroastrianism, while under the former, Islam, Buddhism and Christianity.

History does not tell us precisely while the Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, ever enjoined upon his followers the preaching of his religion to the whole world, but in regard to Christianity we are quite sure that Jesus Christ never advised his disciples to carry his message to other people than the



Israelites for whom it was exclusively meant. The plain recognition of this fact is found in the Bible in which a woman of Canaan is reported to have come to Jesus for help to whom he says :—

“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”<sup>1</sup>

Again : “It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and cast it to the dogs.”<sup>2</sup>

These words are clear enough to show that Jesus Christ was sent only to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel,” and that his spiritual “bread” was meant only for them. It was on the basis of this text that there arose a difference of opinion among the apostles regarding the preaching of Gospel to humanity at large. Those who followed the words of the New Testament contended rightly that the master’s mission was confined to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” and therefore, they had no jurisdiction to preach the gospel beyond that. The reported injunction regarding the preaching of Gospels “to all nations,” is not genuine and has been proved to be a subsequent interpolation. But the in-

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1. Matthew XV : 24

2. Matthew XV : 26

genuity of St. Paul had already condescended to make departures from the teachings of Jesus in forming novel dogmas, so it was not difficult to make another departure with regard to the scope of their preaching. The Christian church is sending to-day so many missionaries to the foreign countries for preaching the "truth," but it hardly thinks that it is directly opposed to the teachings of Jesus Christ. The church is in fact guilty of "casting children's bread to the dogs." The church has no justification on the Biblical authority to send its missionaries for the preaching of Christianity. It is the duty of every "evangelist"; who goes abroad, to question whether Jesus required his followers to go out and preach his Gospel to the non-Israelites? The reply to this question from the Bible is decidedly in the negative. But still the church is busy in prevailing upon the simple-minded Christians, who do not think for themselves, to believe that in disseminating the doctrines of the so-called "Christianity." The church is acting as the only representative of Jesus Christ on the earth.

The case of Islam, however, is different,

it is the universal religion, and the scope of its teachings extends as far as humanity itself. The Holy Prophet Muhammad was sent to the whole world, and his Gospel of truth was meant for the whole of mankind.

The catholicity of the Prophet's mission is repeatedly put forth in the Holy Quran. I should like to quote here a few verses which have a direct bearing on the subject :—

Blessed is He who sent down the distinction (*i. e.* the Quran) upon his servant, that he may be a warner to all the nations." "It (*i. e.*, the Quran) is nothing but a reminder to all the nations".<sup>1</sup>

"We have not sent you but mercy to all the nations".<sup>2</sup>

"And We have not sent you but to all the men as a bearer of good news and a warner. but most men do not know".<sup>3</sup>

"He it is who sent His apostle with the guidance and the true religion that He may make it overcome all the religions, though the polytheists may be averse".<sup>4</sup>

These verses and many more of the Holy Quran clearly establish the universality of

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1. XXXVIII: 87. 2. XXI: 107. 3. XXXIV: 28. 4. LXI: 8.

Islam. It is true that the Holy Prophet first of all preached his religion to the Arabs, but he was quite conscious of the fact that his mission extended to the whole of humanity. That is why he ever took pains to preach Islam to other people of the world as well. After the famous truce of Hudaibiyya with the Quraish, when for the first time the Prophet was satisfied with the situation at home, he sent envoys and epistles to the various kings of the continent, inviting them to Islam. But the task of the reformation of the whole world could not possibly be accomplished during the life time of the Prophet. His function, as a preacher, was only to complete the tenets of the cosmopolitan Faith which he preached, and to create a powerful nation in order to propagate that religion and carry it out into practice after his death. This he did. He completed his mission before his death as the Holy Quran says: "This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour on you and have chosen for you Islam as a religion."<sup>1</sup> The Holy Prophet also left a mighty nation after his

death, who did not only hold sway over the whole of Arabia, but the waves of whose conquests swept all over the old world. The preaching of Islam after the Prophet's demise rested with the Muslim community, which carried the Prophet's message to the distant corners of the globe. The extraordinary rapidity with which Islam spread all over the world is the most wonderful phenomenon in the history of religions. The preaching of Islam was not only a choice with the Muslims through religious "fanaticism." But it was a duty assigned to them by the Holy Quran itself. The verse with which I have commenced this chapter is enough to speak for it. But I will invite the reader's attention to a still more lucid text which says:—

"And thus We have made you an exalted nation, that you may be the bearers of witness to the people, and that the apostle may be a bearer of witness to you." The words "bearers of witness" are explained by the commentators as meaning "so that you may carry to them what you have learned of the revelation and the faith as

Thus in this verse the whole Muslim nation is enjoined to propagate the teachings of Islam throughout the world. In fact, every Muslim is expected to be the missionary of his religion.

### PROPAGATION OF ISLAM IN INDIA.

How was this precept carried out into practice? The reply to this question involves the whole history of the spread of Islam which is, of course, too vast a subject for the purpose of this book. Therefore, I would confine my survey to one country only *i.e.*, India which affords a typical illustration as to how about ninety millions of souls who are living at present throughout the length and breadth of the country and who form a majority of the population in the Panjab and Bengal, accepted the religion of Islam. It is sometimes alleged by the hostile critics of Islam that the Muslim population of India is due to the forced conversion during the Muslim rule. This misconception has often contributed to widen the gulf between Hindus and Muslims. In the interest of the Hindu-Muslim unity, which is admittedly the basic principle of the political

advance of India, it falls within the scope of this book to eradicate this wrong notion from the minds of the people. I need not, therefore, apologize for indulgence in taxing the reader's patience to go through the dry facts of history which I will narrate in the following pages in connection with the propagation of Islam in India. These facts, I hope, will disabuse many minds of the long prejudices against Islam.

Islam, as we have seen, has invariably encouraged religious toleration, and the Holy Quran has clearly laid down that "there should be no compulsion in religion."

The Muslim rulers of India could not be more fanatical than the Moors in Spain. The Moors ruled over Spain for about eight centuries, and after this left it a Christian Spain instead of a Muslim Spain. Similarly the temporal conquest of Islam in India played no conspicuous part in the progress of Islam. The Muslim kings never took upon themselves the "duty of forced conversion." They were content only with the conquest or the administration of the country. In order to substantiate this point I should like

to give some quotations from Dr. Arnold's *Preaching of Islam*. Referring to the Muslim population of India he says :—

“Among the sixty-six millions of Indian Musalmans there are vast numbers of converts or descendants of converts in whose conversion force played no part; and the only influences at work were the teachings and persuasion of peaceful missionaries.”<sup>1</sup> Then, with reference to the religious attitude of the Muslim conquerors, the author we are quoting observes :—

“But these conquerors would appear to have had very little of that “love for souls,” which animates the true missionary and which has achieved such great conquest for Islam. The Khiljis (1206-1320) the Tughliqs (1320-1412) and the Lodis (1451-1526) were generally too busily engaged in fighting to pay much regard to the interest of religion; they thought more of the exaction of tribute than of the work of conversion.”<sup>2</sup>

Again :—

“How little was effected towards the spread of Islam by violence on the part of the

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1. *Preaching of Islam* p. 254.      2. *Preaching of Islam* p. 257



Muhammadan rulers may be judged from the fact that even in the centres of Muhammadan power, such as Delhi and Agra, the Muhammadans in modern times in the former district hardly exceeded one-tenth and in the latter they did not form one-fourth of the population.”<sup>1</sup>

What is then the real cause of the progress of Islam in India? The reply to this question is simple enough. Islam has been from the beginning a missionary religion although there has been no systematic organization pushed on by paid missionaries and backed up by regular Church or State; yet there have always been Muslims, who have ever been guided by the spirit of truth which “cannot rest unless it manifests itself in thought, word and deed which is not satisfied till it has carried its message to every human soul, till what it believes to be the truth is accepted as truth by all members of the human family.”

It is to the selfless exertion of such Muslims that Islam owes its spiritual conquests in the land of Aryan race. That is why

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1. Sir W.W. Hunter: *The Religions of India*. (*The Preaching of Islam* p. 262.)

Islam has gained its greatest and most permanent missionary triumphs in places where its political power has been the weakest, such as in southern India and eastern Bengal. But as these missionary activities were carried on as labour of love by individuals and not by regular bodies, there is hardly any complete record of their work or achievements. The historians of India, of course have sometimes happened to make casual remarks in their works, throwing some light on these missionary movements. It is from these writings that we get some meagre information about the propagation of Islam in India.

This information, though scanty, is yet sufficient to give the reader an idea how the religion of Islam spread in the different parts of the Indian Continent. I will begin my survey from southern India.

#### SOUTHERN INDIA.

The trade in spices, ivory and gems was conducted long between Europe and India by the Arabs and Persians. This brought the Arabs into a close touch, with India and they found a valuable opportunity of proselytizing

the Hindus along with their commercial activities. The country was in those days governed by the Hindu rajas, who extended every sort of protection and patronage to the foreign traders, and never interfered with their proselytizing efforts ; probably because their business resulted in the increased prosperity of the country. Thus very friendly relations existed between the Muslim traders and the Hindu rulers, and this gave the people a chance to study Islam.

The equality of man recognized by this new religion appealed to the masses, and they readily became Muslims in order to emerge out of the degraded position to which they were doomed by the Hindu religion. The story of introduction of Islam to Malabar, as given by a Muslim historian sixteenth century, is very interesting. He says that the first missionaries consisted of a party who came to visit the foot print of Adam in Ceylon. "On their arrival at Crangamore the Raja sent for them and the leader of the party, Shaikh Sharaf b Dinar, and his nephew Malak b Habib took the opportunity of expounding to him the faith of Islam and the mission of Muhammad; and God caused the

truth of the Prophet's teaching to enter into the king's heart and he believed therein ; and his heart became filled with love for the Prophet, and he bade the Shaikh and companions to come back to him again, on their return from the pilgrimage to Adam's foot-print. On their return from Ceylon, the King secretly departed with them in a ship bound for the coast of Arabia, leaving his kingdom in the hands of viceroys. Here he remained for some time, and was just about to return to his own country, with the intention of erecting a mosque there and spreading the faith of Islam, when he fell sick and died. On his death-bed he solemnly enjoined on his companions not to abandon their proposed missionary journey to Malabar; and to assist them in their labours, he gave them letters of recommendation to his viceroys, at the same time bidding them conceal the fact of his death. Armed with these letters Sharaf b Malik and his companions sailed for Cranganore, where the king's letter secured for them a kindly welcome and grant of land on which they built a mosque. Malik b Dinar decided to settle there but Malik Habib set out on a missionary tour with the object of building

mosques throughout Malabar.

“So Malik b Habib set out for Quilon with his worldly goods and his wife and some of his children, and he built a mosque there; then, leaving his wife there, he went on to Hili Marawi, where he built a mosque. Later on he visited the different mosques and offered his prayers in each of them and came back, “praising and giving thanks to God for the manifestation of the faith of Islam in a land filled with unbelievers.”<sup>1</sup> The date of these events is not precisely ascertained. According to popular belief they took place in the life time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Some historians have suggested that they could not have been earlier than the third century of Hijrat. Whatever may be their date the events in themselves are a testimony to peaceful missionary work in Malabar. The agents in this work were chiefly merchants. But Ibn-i-Batutah, the celebrated Muslim historian, has mentioned several “theologians” from Arbia whom he happened to meet in various towns of Malabar. Whether these “theologians” were the same traders who, on account of

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1. *The Preaching of Islam* p p. 264-265

their religious enthusiasm, might have won this title, from the historian, or they formed a separate missionary party, remains doubtful. Anyhow, the fact that the early Muslims took active part in the spread of their religion is established beyond doubt. At the beginning of the tenth century, the newly converted Muslims were estimated to have formed one-fifth of the population." The proselytizing influence of the Muslim missionaries was exceptionally strong and marked in this part of the country. "But for the arrival of the Portuguese," writes Dr. Arnold, "the whole of this coast would have become Muhammadan, because of the frequent conversions that took place and the powerful influence exercised by the Muslim merchants from other parts of India, such as Gujrat and the Deccan, and from Arabia and Persia."<sup>1</sup>

I have already said that there is no record of the individuals who took part in the spread of Islam. But there is a single exception to this in the case of historian Razzaq, who has left an account of his unsuccessful mission to the court of Lemorin

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1. The Preaching of Islam p. 266.

of Calicut, in 1441. He was sent by Temurid Shah Ruh in response to the appeal of an ambassador who was himself an enthusiastic Muslim, and explained to the king the importance of sending a missionary to Lamorin, and "to invite him to accept Islam in accordance with the injunction: "Summon to the ways of thy lord with wisdom and kindly exhortation, and open the bolt of darkness and error that looked his benighted heart and let the splendour of light of the faith and brightness of the sun of knowledge shine into the window of his soul" Abdul Razzaq was selected for this task, and after a long journey he reached Calicut, but here he met with a cold reception and, therefore, returned to Khurasan.

Another Muslim missionary of great renown whose memory is still kept with love and respect in South India is Sayyid Nasir Shah (A.D. 969-1039), who after a good deal of travels in Arabia, Persia and Northern India eventually settled down in Trichnopoly. where he spent the remaining years of his life. He was a man of great learning and piety; and through his precept and practice large number of Hindus embraced Islam.

There is a large number of Muslims in Southern India, who attribute the change of their religion to the preaching of Baba Fakhr-ud-Din whose tomb is still visited by the descendants of his followers. It is said he "was originally a king of Sistan, who abdicated his throne in favour of his brother and became a religious mendicant." He performed the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina; and while he was in Arabia he saw the Holy Prophet in vision, who told him to go to India to preach the religion. He came to Trichinopoly, and here became a disciple of Nasir Shah, who sent him with two hundred more theologians on a proselytizing mission. They finally settled at Penukonda, near a Hindu temple, where their presence was not liked by the Hindu Raja who applied several tests to know whether the religion represented by the Muslim saint is true or that represented by the priest of the Hindu temple. As the final test he "had them both tied up in sacks filled with lime and thrown into tanks. The Hindu priest never reappeared. but Baba Fakhar-ud-Din asserted the superiority of his faith by being miraculously translated to a hill. Thereupon the Raja became a Mus-



lim and his example was naturally followed by a large number of his subjects.

#### LACCADIVE AND MALDIVE.

It was probably from Malabar that Islam sailed to Laccadive and Maldive Islands the whole population of which is Muslim. The inhabitants of these Islands attribute the change of their forefathers' religion to the efforts of Arab merchants, who intermarrying with the natives, settled down there.

The names of these merchants, however, have not been handed down to us, but at Male there is a tomb of Shaikh Yusaf Shams-ub-Din, a native of Tebriz, in Persia who is said to have been a very successful missionary in these Islands. There is another tomb at Andorth of an Arab preacher, called Mumba Mulyaka. He is also very famous for his proselytizing activities, and the introduction of Islam into neighbouring Islands Laccadive is attributed to him.

#### DECCAN.

The Deccan also has been like Malabar a well-known scene of the missionary activities of Islam. In the tenth century a large number of Arab merchants settled here and

intermarried with the women of the country. During the reign of Muslim dynasties of Deccan there was a great influx of Muslim merchants and Muslim missionaries who made a vast spiritual conquest in the cause of Islam, entirely through their preaching and example because "of forcible conversions we have no record under the Deccan dynasties whose rule was characterized by a striking toleration." One of the Arab missionary, Pir Mahabir Khamdayat came to the Deccan in A.D. 1035 ; and at the close of the same century another Muslim saint, Sayyad Muhammad of Gulberga, was successful in converting a large number of the Hindus of the Poona District.

Twenty years later his efforts were crowned with similar success in Belgaum. In the beginning of the fifteenth century there came a relative of one of the greatest saints of Islam, Hazrat Sayyad Abdul Qadir Jalani of Baghdad, and made many converts in Konkan.

Another successful missionary of Islam whose name has been handed down to us is Muhammad Sadiq Sarmast Husayni. He is

said to have come from Medina in 1568, and after travelling over a great part of Western India, settled down at Nasim, where his descendants are still found. Besides these, other unimportant missionaries also worked in this part of the country and achieved more or less success in their efforts.

### SIND.

Another missionary work seems to be centred round the city of Multan.

The Arab conquest of Sind in the beginning of the eighth century brought the Indians in touch with the Arabs and their religion. During the three centuries of the Arab rule there were many accessories to the religion of the conquerors. Several Indian princes voluntarily embraced Islam. A.-Baladhuri tells a story of the conversion of a King of Usayfan country between Kashmir and Multan; and I quote it from Arnold's *Preaching of Islam*. "The people of this country worshipped an idol for which they had built a temple. The son of the King fell sick, and he desired the priests of the temple to pray to the idol for the recovery of his son. They retired for a short time, and then returned saying: "We

‘have prayed and our supplications have been accepted.’ But no long time passed before the youth died. Then the king attacked the temple, destroyed and broke into pieces the idol, and slew the priests. He afterwards invited a party of Muhammadan traders, who made known to him the unity of God; whereupon he believed in the unity, and became a Muslim.”

A similar missionary influence was exercised by other merchants who came to the country during the early days of the Arab conquest. The trade between China, Ceylon and India was carried on in those days by Muslims, who, wherever they went, introduced their religion.

The efforts of these traders were also strengthened by the pious influence of the Muslim saints, who came with the proselytizing spirit. One of the most famous of these was Hazrat Sayyad Muhy-ud-Din, a descendant of Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani. He was bidden in a dream to go to India for the propagation of Islam. Accordingly, he came to Sind in 1422; and succeeded in winning over the hearts of two hundred families to Islam.

Their examples was soon followed by others; and thus the number of Muslim increased considerably.

### BOMBAY.

In the city of Bombay and other commercial centres of the Presidency, there is found at present a large community of Khojas and Bohras, chiefly consisting of wealthy merchants, who are of the Hindu origin, and whose conversion is due to the activities of Muslim missionaries. The most important of these missionaries were Pir Sadr-ud-Din, and Pir Abdullah. Pir Abdullah is said to have been a man of great learning and piety and "is credited with the performance of many miracles." He got a large number of converts from among the Hindus. Therefore, Pir Abdullah is believed by some to be the founder of the sect of Bohras. But others ascribe the conversion of Bohras to another Muslim missionary named Pir Mulla Ali, of whom the following account is recorded by a Shia historian :—

"As the people of Gujrat in those days were infidels, and accepted their religious leader an old man, whose teaching they

blindly followed, Mulla Ali saw no alternative but to go to the old man and ask to become his disciple, intending to set before him such convincing arguments that he would become a Musalman and afterwards to attempt the conversion of others. He accordingly spent some years in the service of the old man, and having learned the language of the people of the country, read their books and acquired knowledge of their sciences. Step by step he unfolded to the enlightened mind of the old man the truth of the faith of Islam, and persuaded him to become a Musalman. After his conversion some of the old man's disciples followed his example. Finally the chief minister of the king of that country became aware of the old man's conversion to Islam, and going to see him, submitted to his spiritual guidance and likewise became a Musalman. For a long time the old man, the minister and the rest of the converts to Islam, kept the fact of their conversion concealed, and through fear of the king always took care to prevent it coming to his knowledge, but at length the king received a report of the minister's having adopted Islam, and began to make inquiries. One day, without giving pre-

vious notice, he went to the minister's house and found him bowing his head in prayer, and was vexed with him. The minister recognized the purpose of the king's visit and realized that his displeasure had been excited by suspicions aroused by his prayer with his being in prostration; but by the guidance of God and Divine grace befitting the occasion, he said that he was making these movements because he was watching a serpent in the corner of the room. When the king turned towards the corner of the room, by divine providence he saw a snake there and accepted the minister's excuse and his mind was cleared of all suspicion. In the end the king also secretly became a Musalman, but for reasons of State concealed his change of mind. When, however, the hour of his death drew near, he gave orders that his body was not to be burnt as is the custom of the infidels." <sup>1</sup>

#### CUTCH AND GUJRAT.

Many of the Cutch and Gujrat Muslims are also of Hindu descent, and ascribe their conversion to the proselytizing activities of the Muslim missionaries, who along with their

preaching are said to have wrought certain miracles. For instance, one of these missionaries, Syed Imam Shah of Pirana, is said to have brought about "a fall of rain after two season of scarcity."

#### BENGAL.

But the missionary activities of Islam have been remarkably successful in Bengal; not because it was under the Muslim rule; but because the masses of the country wanted to emerge out of the degraded position to which they were condemned by Hinduism. That is why a large number of Muslims is found in the country districts and not in the ancient centres of Muslim government. The Muslim missionaries, full of religious enthusiasm, preached the gospel of the unity of God and the equality of man; and it was, so to speak, a revelation from on High to the people who were brought up in the atmosphere saturated with the invidious distinctions of creed and caste. The simplicity of the religion, the catholicity of the Divine dispensation, the fraternity of man and above all the sunlimest and the widest conception of Deity, appealed to the people, and they embraced Islam with open arms.



Islam was also the religion of the ruling race, and it is just possible that some conversions may be due to the influence of temporal power, as the people generally follow the religion of their rulers; yet the fact remains that Islam owes its spiritual conquests in Bengal mainly to the proselytizing efforts of its missionaries.

A typical illustration as to how Islam spread through the inherent influence of its teaching is to be found in the conversion of the ruler whom no worldly interest could have persuaded to change his faith. Raja Khan's son, Jatmal renounced the Hindu religion and was a Muslim at heart. After his father's death in 1414 he called together all the officers and announced his intention of embracing Islam, and proclaimed that if the chiefs would not permit him to ascend the throne, he was ready to give it up to his brother; where-upon they declared that they would accept him as their king, whatever religion he might adopt. Accordingly several learned men of the Muslim faith were "summoned to witness the Raja renounce the Hindu religion and publicly profess his acceptance of Islam. He took the name

Jalal-ud-Din, the pupil of the famous saint Shahab-ud-Din, Suhr-wardi. In the course of his journey he visited Bengal and remained there for a long time. He died in 1244; but the site of his tomb is not known. There is, however, in Bengal a famous shrine which was erected in his honour.

I have dealt so far with the progress of Islam in important parts of the Indian Peninsula, and have attempted to draw an outline of the missionary activities in them. But this survey does not in any way claim to be comprehensive. There have been some other very important preachers of Islam whose religious influence was not confined to one part of the country. For instance, Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti, who although he lived and died in Ajmer; yet is universally respected in India. Originally, he was a native of Persia, and is said to have been a man of great learning and piety. He performed a pilgrimage to Mecca, and there saw the Holy Prophet in a dream, who addressed him: "The Almighty has entrusted the country of India to thee. Go thither and settle in Ajmer. By God's help, the faith of Islam shall through thy piety and that of

thy followers be spread in the land." He obeyed the orders which the Holy Prophet gave him in vision, came to India and settled in Ajmer. Among his first converts here was a yogi who was a spiritual preceptor of a Raja. Gradually his fame spread all over India, and Ajmer became one of the religious centres of the country. On his way to Ajmer, he is said to have converted about seven hundred persons in the city of Delhi. His memory is still kept with great reverence, and in commemoration thereof an *urs* is held annually in Ajmer, when the people flock from all parts of the country to visit his tomb. Another important missionary whose activities have been conspicuously crowned with success is Sayyid Jalal-ud-Din who, it is said, settled in Uch, and converted quite a large number of persons to Islam. His descendants are still held in great esteem, and are in charge of his shrine. His grandson, Sayyid Mukhdum Jahanian, too, has been a successful missionary and is credited with the conversion of several tribes in the Punjab.

Towards the end of the same century there came another missionary into India from Iraq in Persia, and took up his residence

in Panipat, near Delhi. He is known as Bu Ali Qalander; and the Muslim Rajputs of the city forming quite a respectable proportion of the population, who are the descendants of a certain Amir Singh, ascribe the conversion of their ancestors to this saint. Similar missionary activities have been going on in more recent years as well, especilly the second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the proselytizing activity with very brilliant results. But as the whole work was purely of an individualistic character, there is no detailed account of its system and success. The vague, scanty information which one can gather from different sources tends to establish the fact that Muslim theologians were busy in preaching the tenets of Islam and getting converts in hundreds. A certain Haji Muhammad is said to have converted as many as two hundred thousand Hindus and another missionary is also represented to have made one thousand converts in Banglore. It is just possible that these figures might have been exaggerated; but it is beyond doubt that the Muslim missionaries made vast spiritual conquests which owed no obligations to the temporal power

of Islam in India.

The opponents of Islam have often said that it owes its propagation to force and not to conviction, but it is curious how they fail to see that the converts of Islam have been sometimes the most zealous preachers of their new faith, which is impossible if they had no conviction. On this point, I should like to quote a passage from Dr. Arnold's *Preaching of Islam*, which gives an account of a conversion and runs thus: "In Patiala Maulvi Ubaydullah, a converted Brahman of a great learning proved himself to be a zealous preacher of Islam, and in spite of the obstacles that were at first thrown in his way by his relatives, achieved so great a success that his converts almost filled an entire ward of the city. He wrote controversial works, passed through several editions directed against the Christian and Hindu religions. In one of these books, he thus speaks of his own conversion: 'I, Muhammad Ubaydallah the son of Munshi Kotu Mal resident of Payal in the Patiala State, declare that this poor man in his childhood and during the lifetime of his father, was held in the bondage of idol-worship; but the mercy of God caught me by

the hand and drew me towards Islam. i. e., I came to know the excellence of Islam and deficiencies of Hinduism; and I accepted Islam heart and soul; and counted myself one of the servants of the Prophet of God (peace be upon him). At that time intelligence, which is the gift of God, suggested to me that it was mere folly and laziness to blindly follow the customs of one's forefathers and be misled by them, and not make researches into matters of religion and faith, whereon depend our eternal bliss or misery. With these thoughts, I began to study the current faiths and investigated each of them impartially. I thoroughly explored the Hindu religion and conversed with learned Pandits, gained a thorough knowledge of the Christian faith, read the books of Islam and conversed with learned men. In all of them, I found errors and fallacies, with the exception of Islam, the excellence of which became clearly manifest to me; its leader Muhammad, the Prophet, possesses such moral excellences that no tongue can describe them, and he alone who knows the belief and liturgy and the moral teachings and practice of this faith can fully realize them. Praise be to

God! so excellent is this religion that everything in it leads the soul to God. In short, by the grace of God, the distinction between truth and falsehood became as clear to me as night and day, darkness and light. But although my heart had long been enlightened by the brightness of Islam, and my mouth fragrant with the profession of faith, yet my evil passions and Satan had bound me with the fetters of the luxury and ease of this fleeting world, and I was in evil case because of outward observances of idolatry. At length the grace of God thus admonished me: 'How long wilt thou keep this priceless pearl hidden within the shell and this refreshing perfume shut up in the casket? Thou shouldest wear this pearl about the neck and profit by this perfume.' Moreover the learned have declared that to conceal one's faith in Islam and retain the dress and habits of infidels, brings a man to hell. So (God be praised), on the Id-al-Fitr, 1264, the sun of my conversion emerged from its screen of clouds, and I performed my devotions in public with my Muslim Brethren." <sup>1</sup>

This survey will remain incomplete, if

we omit the missionary activities carried on by Muslim faqirs or saints in Kashmir. With the exception of Sind, this part of India contains the largest number of Muslims, i e. seventy percent of the whole population ; and the only explanation of this overwhelming majority of Muslims is to be found in the long continued missionary movement. In the beginning of the fourteenth century the king of Kashmir is said to have embraced Islam, and adopted the Muslim name of Sadar-ud-Din through the preaching of a certain Bulbul Shah. In the reign of Aurangzeb, the Raput Raja of the Kishtwar was converted by the miracles of one Sayyid Shah Farid-nd-Din, and his conversion appears to have been followed by the majority of his subjects.

I have so far dealt with the proselytizing activities of Muslim saints resulting in the additions to the numerical strength of Islam. But there is also another aspect of the missionary work, viz, the defence of a religion against the hostile attacks from outside. During recent years the Muslims of India have had to cope with this task as well. With the advent of the British rule there was a great



influx of Christian missionaries in India, who did not only preach their religion but directed venomous attacks against Islam. They produced literature and issued periodicals, disfiguring and misrepresenting Islam. The Muslims, unlike the Christian writers, had no organized system of publicity and had therefore, to draw upon the individual efforts of their theologians, who wrote voluminous works refuting the objections of the Christian writers and the Arya Samaj, a sect of Hinduism, formed under the leadership of the late Pandit Dayananda, who introduced some reforms in the old religion of Brahmanism. In this connection the valuable services of late Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Nawab Mahdi Ali; Maulvi Chirag Ali; Maulvi Qasam Ali and especially of the late Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and Maulvi Hakim Nur-ud Din, have won the universal commendation by the educated section of Muslim India. The late Mirza Sahib rose with the mission of the propagation of Islam and rendered valuable service in this direction. It is however, to be regretted that the majority of his followers have gone astray, and have begun to believe him as a *prophet* instead of a re-

former. This is directly opposed to the teachings of Islam; as the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is admittedly the last of the prophets. The *Qadianis* also think all Muslims outside the pale of Islam, except the followers of the late Mirza Sahib. This is again a great disservice to the House of Islam : and a grave danger from within.

I cannot close this chapter without a word to my co-religionists in India, and that is this. The verdict of history is that Islam has invariably made progress through peaceful means. It has never spread through the sword, as is often misrepresented by its opponents. The great majority of Muslims which is found in some parts of India is the result of the missionary activities on the part of the Muslim saints and writers, and not of any pressure from the Muslim Government. And if you still cherish the great hope of the progress of Islam, the only way for its realization lies in the propagation of Islam, in the East and the West through missionary activities. The dissemination of Islamic literature is the most effective and the cheapest method of preaching Islam.

# APPENDIX

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRUE RELIGION.

Fortunately we are living in an age of light and learning. The scientific research is the salient feature of our times. We have succeeded in making wonderful discoveries in the mystery of nature. We analyse every thing ; and our analytical faculty has reached its highest point. In fact, our achievements in the domain of science are chiefly due to the development of this faculty. We have found out the properties of water and air, of earth and fire ; of electricity and radium, and the wonderful inventions of modern times which have contributed so much to our civilization, are based upon our this scientific knowledge. Man's potentiality of acquiring knowledge, has given him precedence over angels ; and the same superiority has been referred to in the Quran (II:31) where it is related that "God gave Adam the knowledge of all things," whereas the angels were destitute of it. It is due to this capacity, that man has made so many inventions and discoveries in the domain of science.

Now, if we can study the laws of nature ;

if we can find out the characteristics and properties of its elements; should we not discover the characteristics of a true and living religion? Is religion only a lip profession? Is it only a cloak, to be worn on Sundays, Saturdays or Fridays? If so, then religion is nothing but hypocrisy; a farce, and no sensible man will ever like to profess it. But no, religion is a reality; it is a living force; it is a science. Just as our scientific knowledge has a practical bearing on human civilization, similarly our knowledge in the sphere of religion has a deep influence in building up the moral and spiritual side of our character. Just as our scientific knowledge revolutionises the destinies of nations, and moulds the civilization of mankind, so the religious knowledge transforms the moral and spiritual character of a nation or an individual. In fact, religion is a great factor in the formation of national or individual life. A religion that has no practical bearing on our character is not worth professing. If it has nothing to do with our daily life, if it does not instruct us how to fight the great battle of life, it is a mere school of thought, destined to die a natural death. It has got no justification to

exist in the world, as it is a useless thing; and its worthlessness is enough to show that it is not a true religion from God.

A living and true religion, however, gives a tone to human character and civilization, just as our scientific research adds to the prosperity and happiness of mankind. There is perfect harmony between a true religion and science; and it must be so, because both are based upon truth. The only difference is that the domain of religion is the moral and spiritual side of human character, while that of science, the physical and material side.

We stand in need of knowledge and experience for our material progress; we equally stand in need of knowledge for the uplift of the spiritual side of our nature. We make progress in civilization through our scientific knowledge *i. e.* by reading the will of God as written in the Book of Nature. Similarly, we soar higher and higher in the regions of morality and spirituality through the knowledge which we acquire from the word of God. Thus Science studies the works of God, and Religion the word of God. Both are seeking after knowledge—the will of God

as manifested in the world. But the channels are different *i.e.* one reads the work of the Supreme Being, the other His word; and as the ultimate goal is one and the same Science and Religion can be called twins sucking at the breast of the selfsame mother.

Well then, if Religion is but another delicate branch of science, can we not study it like a science; and find out its basic principles or characteristics? What are then the characteristics of a true religion?

I have already said that religion acquires knowledge from the word of God. That is why every religion in the world claims the possession of a revealed Book. The heavenly scriptures which are in the hands of the exponents of various religions are sure signs of the fact that the word of God is the great foundation on which the super-structure of a religion stands. But what do these scriptures prove? They prove that God spoke once upon a time, or the utmost that He used to speak in the dead past. But can this proposition satisfy the men living in the present, if they do not experience the same Divine bliss in their own age? I am afraid the religions which do not believe in the

continuation of revelation will surely fail to convince one about the existence of God. One can ask : if God spoke in the past; why does He not speak at the present? Are we to believe in God on the strength of past stories. The Arya Samaj believes that God never spoke after the revelation of the Vedas. Similarly our Christian friends claim that the Holy Bible is the last word of God, after which He never addressed a man. Can such religions prove that this God is really a living God! If God spoke in the times of Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them), He should speak at the present too. And if He does not, what on earth is the proof of His existence in the modern times. God is invariably represented by all religions as eternal and ever-living. But is not His long silence inconsistent with His eternal attribute of speech? Thus if Divine revelation can be an element of a true religion, it is only the fresh revelation in every age, because the revelation of the past is but a mystery affording no solid and fresh proof for the men of the living present.

In this respect, I must say, Islam occupies a unique position among the prominent

religions of the world. While Christianity and the Vedic Dharma, deny the continuity of the Divine revelation, Islam stands for its continuity. The Holy Quran says:—"The righteous men shall have good news in this world's life;" and the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "Nothing is left of the prophethood but the good news." *i. e.* the Holy Quran is the most perfect and complete law for humanity of all ages and all times, and therefore the prophethood has come to an end; yet the righteous people will continue to receive good news from God. This promise of the Quran has not been only an empty word; but the truth of it is brought home in all ages by the lives of the Muslim saints and righteous men who have received the Divine communications and laid claim to it. Thus the God of Islam *does speak* at the present; as He spoke in the past. But does Christianity or the Vedic Dharma too believe in such a living God?

Next to revelation comes the necessity of dispensation. Man is endowed with various capacities and potentialities; and a harmonious development of all human faculties is the only object of a religion. As I have already



said religion should not be only a lip-belief ; but it should have power to mould human character, and bring the various faculties of man into full and harmonious play. In other words, the full fledged growth of human nature is the chief aim of a religion. But this cannot be achieved unless we are subject to certain explicit laws. Every-thing in the world is subject to a certain Divine law ; and it is through obedience to this law that it attains to its perfection or goal. Obedience to Divine law is the keynote of progress.

Therefore, a religion that aims at the all-round development of human faculties must provide us with a complete and perfect dispensation. It should lay down the detailed rules and regulations of life. It should teach us how to treat a friend and a foe. It should tell us how to discharge our multifarious duties in this world of ours. For instance, it should formulate the duty of a sovereign to his subjects, of subjects to a king, of a husband to his wife and so on. In a word, it should tell us how to *live*. The second function of a true religion, therefore, is to give a complete code of life for the guidance of mankind. Islam, put to this test too, comes up to the

mark. It is universally admitted that the Holy Quran, the purity of whose text is beyond the shadow of doubt, comprises a complete code of life, so far as the basic principles are concerned. And the *Sunnat i. e.* the traditions of the Holy Prophet provide us with the details and exemplifications of the principles enunciated in the Holy Book of Islam. Thus the *Shariat* or the Islamic law is perfect both in theory and practice.

The third important requisite of a true religion is the model or exemplar, as an example is better than precept. Men are apt to copy; and they are social beings as rational. Hence a code of life, a dispensation alone, would have not been sufficient for our guidance. We want a perfect model before us who should be a historical personage, so that we may get light and lessons from his life. Again, our model must be one who has passed through the various stages of social life so that at every step of our progress and in every station of life we may be able to follow in his footprints.

In this respect, too, Islam stands unique among all the religions of the world. Chris-

tianity and Hinduism have, no doubt, their own models. The Christian Church presents Jesus (peace be upon him) as her model and exemplar; and the Hindus have so many gods, of whom Krishna and Rama are very important. Buddhism has got the Buddha. We have every respect for these personages. But we cannot refrain from pointing out that these personalities can hardly serve the purpose of a model or exemplar. Their lives are enshrouded in myths. We can make nothing out of them. No accurate and precise account of their lives is handed down to us. The Rationalist Church in England has gone so far as to deny the very existence of a historical Jesus. This school holds that Christ is only a mythical name. The Gospels which are the main source of Jesus' life have very little historical value. Besides, the material they give, is too meagre and scanty to serve the purpose of a beacon for our lives. Similar is the case with other religious personalities of the world. Therefore, they cannot be models for humanity.

Further, Jesus, and others who, like him, are applauded to divinity have another special

disadvantage for being exemplars for mankind. They are believed to be gods or God-incarnate by their followers. Well, if they are gods, they cannot be models for *men*. They are not of our species. Our exemplar must be from amongst ourselves, who can realize our difficulties, who has the same aspirations, the same difficulties and the same methods of surmounting them. Again, what is the use of setting up a God as our exemplar, unless we are aspiring to become a God or God-incarnate? And if we are all gods potentially, and possess *divinity* in ourselves, then the divinity of Jesus and other gods like him dwindles down, and they are all brought down to the level of humanity. In short, religious personalities like Buddha, Jesus, Krishna, Ram Chandra, cannot be models for humanity; because, firstly, they are not historical personages, their lives being enshrouded in myth; and secondly, they are believed to be gods by their followers; and evidently a god or God-incarnate cannot be model for men.

But Muhammad (peace be upon him) is surely a historical personage. The events of his life are handed down to us with wonder-

ful accuracy and preciseness. No sovereign in the world has got such a complete chronicle of his life's events as our Holy Prophet. He still seems to be living among his followers, because every practice of his has not been reduced to writing only; but also to practice in their daily life. The whole Islamic world is, in a way, a living history of the Prophet. Therefore, he *is the* model for humanity,

And again, Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a mortal like ourselves. He is one of us. He has no claim to divinity. His whole glory lies in being a man—a perfect man, an exemplar for humanity. The Holy Quran says: *رسول الله امرؤة حمئة*: i. e. “And in the Apostle of Allah there is an excellent example for you.” He passed through the various stations of life; and saw the vicissitudes of fortune. From the state of a poor orphan, he rose to the eminence of Arabia's Emperor; and in all the phases of his life, we can glean lessons for our guidance. We all know that he was a loving husband, a kind father, a true friend, a noble foe, a faithful ally and a great administrator and conquerer. He had the qualities of both the head and the heart; and Providence gave him ample chance to

display these qualities in practice. His life is eventful. At one time he flies from Mecca at the mid of night to save his life, and deliver the Divine message he was charged with; at another he enters the self-same city as the Emperor of the whole of Arabia. Muhammad, therefore, is decidedly an "excellent exemplar for humanity."

In brief, Islam is at present a true religion from God ; because :—

(1) it recognises the continuity of Divine revelation ; and the lives of the Muslim saints in all ages exemplify it.

(2) its Holy Book, the Quran, gives a complete code of life.

(3) it presents a perfect model in the life of the Prophet, who is undoubtedly a historical personage and whose life, being eventful, is pregnant with the best lessons for posterity.

Is there any other religion, which can claim to possess these features ?

THE END.

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